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Berridge

THE

CHRISTIAN WORLD

UNMASKED.

BY THE REV. JOHN BERRIDGE, A. M.

VICAR OF EVERTON, (ENG.)

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

CORRECTED AND ABRIDGED BY

ABNER MORSE,

Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Nantucket.

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PREFACE.

RIDICULE and satire have been censured as always injurious and unchristian. When they are employed, as is too commonly the case, merely to inflict pain, exalt self, or depress others, the charge is just. But the use of them for such unworthy ends, proves nothing against them as means of reformation. If experience, observation, and the Bible, shew the necessity, benefit, and lawfulness of sometimes employing them, it is not the principle, but the perversion of it, which is criminal. Vices do exist which no other ordinary means can correct. "Many follies are so humble that grave admonition cannot notice them; and if it did, would notice them in vain: and many vices are so gigantic, and those who practice them are so callous as to be proof against every weapon but the polished and barbed dart of satire." Against such it has often been directed with effect. The ab-

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surdities of Idolatry were so ridiculed by the Fathers, and the impositions of Popery by the Reformers, as greatly to facilitate the spread of the gospel. Addison, Cowper, and others, by satirizing vice, have done great service to morality; and who may not see faults daily corrected and prevented by the same means? The sacred writers relate without censure instances of ridicule in the conduct of saints: and, while speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, they employ it themselves. When the priests of Baal sacrificed and prayed to him for miraculous evidence of his divinity, "Elijah mocked them, and said, cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." Isaiah, to expose the superstition of the Heathen, describes their idols in a ludicrous manner. Paul, in order to shame to repentance the Corinthians who had grown proud of their good estate, ironically exclaims, "now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us:" and to mortify their submission to teachers who gloried after the flesh, he says, "ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise." The following words of Christ, spoken to reprove the Jews, have been supposed to partake of a similar spirit. "What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? a reed shaken with the

wind? But what went ye out for to see? a man clothed with soft raiment?"—"Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the market, and calling unto their fellows, and saying unto them, we have piped unto you and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, behold a man gluttonous, a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

We would not by these remarks, countenance the abuse of satire, or the indulgence of vain and wanton mirth. Wit is commonly the idol of its possessor. "Half that have it are undone," and employed in undoing others. The awful consequence of faults the most deserving of ridicule, ought to change "our laughter to mourning," and make us "watch unto prayer."

Satire is allowable only on very peculiar occasions: and even then, it must be used with great caution, and with a sincere aim at the glory of God and the good of man. Thus it seems to have been used by the author of the *World Unmasked.* "If his expressions ever wear an air of pleasantry, it is because he would tempt his readers by a smile to hear him out" on subjects involving their highest happiness.

Offensive allusions and local references; harsh, low and obsolete words, contained in former editions, are in many instances omitted or changed in this without sacrificing or altering any important thought. Anecdotes of the author, taken from "Cheerful Piety," are inserted in his life: and a hope is indulged that obstacles to the circulation of this book are removed; and, that whatever improvements remain to be made in its phraseology or divinity, it will contribute to enlighten men, and make them wise unto salvation.

Nantucket, August, 1822.

LIFE

OF

REV. JOHN BERRIDGE.

LIFE

OF THE LATE

Rev. JOHN BERRIDGE.

THE Rev. John Berridge, the son of John Berridge, a reputable and wealthy farmer and grazier, was born at Kingston, March 1st, 1716. Being a particular favorite of an aunt, who resided at Nottingham, he spent the greater part of his early years with her in that town, and there he received all the education which was necessary to qualify him for business. His father intended to bring him up to agriculture; but God designed him to occupy a more exalted station in society; and began to prepare his mind for it, at so early a period, that his piety excited the attention of all who knew him.

At the age of fourteen, God was pleased to convince him that he was a sinner, and must be born again. About this time he left school, and returned to his father, with an intention to apply himself to business. A tailor, who was occasionally employed in the family, being a man of strict sobriety, and struck with the uncommon appearances of piety in one so young, conversed with him on serious subjects, whenever he came to the house on business. As opportunities of this nature seldom occurred, his love for religion induced him to cultivate a more intimate acquaintance with this man, by going frequently to his house for the purpose of serious conversation. His relations, at length, suspecting he had too much religion, and fearing to what it would grow, discovered some inclination to discourage it. They insinuated, that since his

attachment was so strong to his new companion, he should be bound to him in articles of apprenticeship.

This threat had not the designed effect: for so prevalent was his bias to reading, prayer, and serious discourse, that he frequently repeated his visits. Finding this their scheme unsuccessful, and conceiving that his predilection for reading, and religion, would entirely unfit him for business, they resolved, though reluctantly, to send him to the university. In this determination, which was perfectly congenial with his own inclinations, he most readily concurred; and after previous preparation, entered Clare Hall, October 28, 1734, in the nineteenth year of his age. A neighbor soon after meeting his father, and inquiring for his son, he jocosely replied, "He is gone to be a light to lighten the Gentiles." This testimony was true.

Being now in his element, he pursued his studies with uncommon avidity, and made such progress in every branch of literature, as rendered him in no respect inferior to any of his cotemporaries. But as he seemed to have known very little of the plague of his heart, and less of Jesus Christ, it required more grace than he yet possessed, to withstand the temptations of his situation and connections. Favored with a good understanding, improved by literature, and possessing a natural vein of humour, which was extremely fascinating, he rose in respect; and his acquaintance was courted at the university by ecclesiastics of superior rank, though of wider principles, and less rigid morals. As evil communications corrupt good manners, he caught the contagion, and drank into the Socinian scheme to such a degree, as to lose all serious impressions, and discontinue private prayer, for the space of ten years, a few intervals excepted. In these intervals he would weep bitterly, reflecting on the sad state of his mind, compared with what it was when he came to the university, and would frequently say to a fellow-student, now an eminent Minister in the Establishment, *O that it were with me as in years past!* Conscience, however, at length resuming her authority, he was compelled to relinquish sentiments so derogatory to God,

and so subversive of every good principle and practice. He now discovered that they not only lessened God the Son in his esteem, but God the Father also; and tended to promote no higher a morality than what comported with all the maxims and pleasures of the present world. With the renunciation of his former errors, he returned to the regular exercise of devotional religion, although it was but a small remove, if any, from pharisaical.

Soon after this he began to feel strong inclinations to exercise his ministry, and accordingly in 1749, in the 33d year of his age he accepted the curacy of Stapleford, near Cambridge, which he regularly served six years from College. His parishioners were extremely ignorant and dissolute, and he was much concerned to do them good. He took extraordinary pains, and pressed very earnestly upon them the necessity of sanctification; but had the mortification to find that they continued as unsanctified as before. "There was indeed a little more of the form of religion in the parish; but nothing more of the power." In the year 1755, on the 7th of July, he was admitted to the Vicarage of Everton, in the gift of Clare Hall, where he continued to reside to the end of his life. Here again he pressed sanctification and regeneration upon his hearers, as strenuously as he could, but with as little success as before. "Nor was it to be wondered at, as his preaching rather tended to make them trust in themselves as righteous, than to depend upon Christ for the remission of sins, through faith in his blood."

Having continued for two years in this unsuccessful mode of preaching, he began to be discouraged. A doubt now arose in his mind, whether he was right himself, and preached as he ought to do. This suggestion he rejected, for some time with disdain, supposing the advantages of his education, which had improved to a high degree, could not leave him ignorant respecting the best method of instructing his people. This happened about Christmas 1757: but not being able to repel, though he strenuously opposed these secret misgivings, his mind was wrought to a degree of embarrassment and distress, to which

he had been hitherto a stranger. This led him to cry mightily to God for direction. The constant language of his heart was this: "Lord, if I am right, keep me so; if I am not, make me so; and lead me to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus." About ten days after, as he sat one morning, musing upon a text of Scripture, these words were, in a wonderful manner, darted into his mind, and seemed indeed like a voice from heaven: "Cease from thine own works, only believe." No sooner were these words impressed upon his mind, than the scales fell from his eyes, and he perceived the application. Just before this occurrence, he was in a very unusual calm; but now his soul experienced an immediate tempest. Tears gushed forth like a torrent. He saw the rock upon which he had been splitting for near thirty years, by endeavoring to blend the law and the gospel, and unite Christ's righteousness with his own. Immediately he began to think upon the words *faith* and *believe*, and looking into his Concordance, found them inserted in many successive columns. This surprised him to a great degree, and he instantly formed a resolution to preach Jesus Christ, and salvation by faith. He therefore composed several sermons of this description, and addressed his hearers in a manner very unusual, and far more pointed than heretofore.

Now God began to bless his ministry, after he had preached in this strain, two or three sabbaths, and was ruminating whether he was yet right, as he had perceived no better effects from these, than his former discourses, one of his parishioners unexpectedly came to inquire for him. Being introduced, "Well, Sarah," said he.—She replied, "Well, not so well I fear."—"Why, what is the matter, Sarah?"—"Matter, I don't know what's the matter. These new sermons. I find we are all to be lost now. I can neither eat, drink, nor sleep. I don't know what's to become of me." The same week came two or three more, on a like errand. It is easy to conceive what relief these visits must have afforded his mind, in a state of such anxiety and suspense. So confirmed was he thereby, in the persuasion that his late impressions were from God, that he determined in future to know nothing but

Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Now he was deeply humbled, that he should have spent so many years of his life to no better purpose, than to confirm his hearers in their ignorance. Thereupon immediately, he burnt all his old sermons, and shed a flood of the tears of joy, in their destruction. These circumstances alarmed the neighborhood, the church quickly became crowded, and God gave testimony to the word of his grace, in the very frequent conviction and conversion of sinners.

For several years he continued a very rigid Arminian. Nor was it by arguments in debate upon the subject of controversy between Arminians and Calvanists, but by a long confinement from preaching, occasioned by a nervous fever, that he was led into more consistent views of divine truth, and in the firm belief of which he ended his days. In this long and severe affliction, the Lord led him into a path which he had not known, and taught him many useful lessons to which he had been altogether a stranger. Hitherto he had learnt to be an active, but not a passive servant of the Lord. To be laid aside in the plenitude of his success, was so irritating to his nature, that, like Jonas, his heart fretted against the Lord, and he wished he had never been employed in the work of the ministry. To such a pitch of criminal exasperation was he carried against the government of God, for checking his ministerial career, that he could not even endure the sight of his Bible, nor bear to hear the people sing in his adjoining church. But how vain is it to lift up the heel against the God of the universe, and repine at his wise dispensations, especially when subsequent experience proves, that they were all designed to answer the most valuable purposes, in preserving from the dangerous elevations of popularity, in fitting for a sphere of action equally successful, and in leading the mind into more enlarged views of the abounding grace of the everlasting gospel!

These observations were actually exemplified in his experience. For in this furnace of affliction, he became much more acquainted with the plague of his own heart, was led to

see that the work of God could be carried on without his agency, and was convinced of the divine sovereignty in the dispensations of grace, and appointments to the sacred office. The Lord having in this manner humbled his mind to the meekness of a lamb, restored him at length to the full exercise of his ministry, with additional improvements in self-acquaintance, and usefulness in the church of God. The Rev. Mr. V——, who has been in habits of friendship with him from their admission into College, recently informed us, that coming to reside in his neighbourhood, after a relapse of some years, on paying him a visit, he was never more surprized, than to see the great increase of his unaffected humility, and sweetness of temper, since that affliction.

After this event, his connexions with Christians of the Calvanistic persuasion were enlarged; and though there were but few interchanges of labor between him and Arminian ministers, yet their friendship and respect remained inviolable. Sometime before Mr. Whitefield's death, he made his first visit to the Tabernacle in London, and continued to renew it, every year, to the close of his valuable life.

His mental powers were far from contemptible. He possessed a strength of understanding—a quickness of perception—a depth of penetration—a brilliancy of fancy—and a fund of prompt wit, beyond most men. A vein of innocent humor ran through all his private discourses. This softened, what some might call, the austerity of religion, and rendered his company pleasant to people of a less serious habit; but what is very singular it never overcame his gravity.

In learning, he was inferior to very few of the most celebrated sons of science and literature at the University. His masculine ability, his uniform sobriety, and long residence at college, were favorable to improvement; and so insatiable was his thirst for knowledge, that from his entrance at Clare Hall, to his acceptance of the Vicarage of Everton, he regularly studied fifteen hours a day. Two years after this he fled to Jesus alone for refuge.

Having found so good a master, he entered upon his work

with cheerful steps, and pursued it with the greatest industry. He did not confine his labors to the narrow limits of Everton, a small and trifling parish, but, like the majestic sun, illumined an extensive tract of country. His love to mankind was ardent. He knew the worth of an immortal soul; he knew the awful terrors of the Lord; he knew the emptiness of the present world; he knew the sandy foundation upon which thousands build; he knew the dangerous devices of Satan; he knew the awful precipice upon which the ungodly stand. His bowels melted with pity, his heart yearned to assist them. He therefore left no means unattempted to awaken their concern, and allure them to the Son of God

The following anecdote serves to shew with what zeal and fortitude he obeyed the episcopal mandate, "Go and seek Christ's sheep wherever thou canst find them."

"Soon after I began," said he, "to preach the Gospel of Christ at Everton, the church was filled from the villages around us, and the neighboring clergy felt themselves hurt at their churches being deserted. The 'squire of my own parish, too was much offended. He did not like to see so many strangers, and to be so incommoded. Between them both it was resolved, if possible, to turn me out of my living. For this purpose they complained of me to the bishop of the diocese, that I had preached out of my own parish. I was soon after sent for by the bishop; I did not much like my errand, but I went.

"When I arrived, the bishop accosted me in a very abrupt manner: 'Well, Berridge, they tell me you go about preaching out of your own parish. Did I institute you to the livings of A. or E. or P.?' 'No, my Lord,' said I, 'neither do I claim any of these livings; the clergymen enjoy them undisturbed by me.'—Well, but you go and preach there, which you have no right to do.'—'It is true, my lord, I was one day at E——n, and there were a few people assembled together, and I admonished them to repent of their sins, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls; and I re-

member seeing five or six clergymen that day, my Lord, all out of their own parishes, upon E——n bowling-green.'—'Poh!' said his lordship, 'I tell you, you have no right to preach out of your own parish; and if you do not desist from it, you will very likely be sent to Huntingdon gaol.'—'As to that, my lord' said I, 'I have no greater liking to Huntingdon gaol than other people; But I had rather go thither with a good conscience, than live at my liberty without one.'

"Here his lordship looked very hard at me, and very gravely assured me, 'that I was beside myself, and that in a few months time I should either be better or worse.'—'Then' said I, 'my lord, you may make yourself quite happy in this business; for if I should be better, you suppose I shall desist from this practice of my own accord; and, if worse, you need not send me to Huntingdon gaol, as I shall be provided with an accommodation in Bedlam.'

"His Lordship now changed his mode of attack. Instead of threatening, he began to entreat; 'Berridge,' said he, 'you know I have been your friend, and I wish to be so still. I am continually teased with the complaints of the clergymen around you. Only assure me that you will keep to your own parish; you may do as you please there. I have but little time to live; do not bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.'

"At this instant two gentlemen were announced, who desired to speak with his lordship. 'Berridge,' said he 'go to your inn, and come again at such an hour, and dine with me.' I went, and on entering a private room fell immediately upon my knees. I could bear threatening, but knew not how to withstand entreaty; especially the entreaty of a respectable old man. At the appointed time I returned. At dinner I was treated with great respect. The two gentlemen also dined with us. I found they had been informed who I was, as they sometimes cast their eyes towards me in some such manner as one would glance at a monster. After dinner his Lordship took me into the garden. 'Well, Berridge,' said he, 'have you considered of my request?'—'I have my Lord,'

said I, 'and have been upon my knees concerning it.'—'Well, and will you promise me that you will preach no more out of your own parish?'—'It would afford me great pleasure,' said I 'to comply with your lordship's request, if I could do it with a good conscience. I am satisfied, the Lord has blessed my labors of this kind, and I dare not desist.'—'A good conscience!' said his lordship; 'do you not know that it is contrary to the canons of the church?'—'There is one canon, my lord,' I replied, 'which saith, *Go preach the gospel to every creature.*'—'But why should you wish to interfere with the charge of other men? one man cannot preach the gospel to all men.'—'If they would preach the gospel themselves,' said I, 'there would be no need for my preaching it to their people; but as they do not, I cannot desist.' His Lordship then parted with me in some displeasure. I returned home, not knowing what would befal me; but thankful to God that I had preserved a conscience void of offence.

"I took no measures for my own preservation, but Divine Providence wrought for me in a way that I never expected. When I was at Clare-Hall, I was particularly acquainted with a fellow of that college; and we were both upon terms of intimacy with Mr. Pitt, the late Lord Chatham, who was at that time also at the university.

"This fellow of Clare Hall when I began to preach the gospel became my enemy, and did me some injury in some ecclesiastical privileges which beforetime I had enjoyed. At length, however, when he heard that I was likely to come into trouble, and to be turned out of my living at Everton, his heart relented. He began to think, it seems, within himself, we shall ruin this poor fellow among us. This was just about the time that I was sent for by the bishop. Of his own accord he writes a letter to Mr. Pitt, saying nothing about my methodism, but to this effect: 'Our old friend Berridge has got a living at Bedfordshire, and, I am informed, he has a 'squire in his parish, that gives him a deal of trouble; has accused him to the bishop of the diocese, and, it is said, will turn him out of the living; I wish you could contrive to put

a stop to these proceedings.' Mr. Pitt was at that time a young man and not choosing to apply to the bishop himself, spoke to a certain nobleman, to whom the bishop was indebted for his promotion. This nobleman, within a few days, made it his business to see the bishop, who was then in London. 'My lord,' said he, 'I am informed you have a very honest fellow, one Berridge, in your diocese, and that he has been ill-treated by a litigious 'squire that lives in his parish. He has accused him I am told, to your lordship, and wishes to turn him out of his living. You would oblige me, my lord, if you would take no notice of that 'squire, and not suffer the honest man to be interrupted in his living.' The bishop was astonished, and could not imagine in what manner things could have thus got round: It would not do, however, to object; he was obliged to bow compliance, and so I continued ever after in my sphere of action."

In his annual circuit through the counties of Bedford, Cambridge, Essex, Hartford and Huntingdon, Mr. Berridge preached upon an average from ten to twelve sermons a week, and frequently rode an hundred miles. Nor were these extraordinary exertions the hasty fruit of intermitting zeal, but were regularly continued during the long succession of more than twenty years, exemplifying through the whole of his ministerial career, the motto of a late celebrated dissenting clergyman, *Dum vivimus vivâmus.*

As to his usefulness, we learn from more sources of information than one, that he was in the first year visited by a thousand different persons under serious impressions; and it has been computed, that under his own and the joint ministry of Mr. Hicks, about four thousand were awakened to a concern for their souls, in the space of twelve months

No man ever pursued the work of his master with more disinterested views His purse was as open as his heart, though not so large. At home, his tables were served with a collation for his numerous hearers, who came from afar on Sabbath days, and his field and stable open for their horses. Abroad, houses and barns were rented, lay-preachers maintained, and

his own travelling expenses disbursed by himself. Cottagers were always gainers by his company. He invariably left an half crown for the homely provision of the day, and during his itineracy it actually cost him five hundred pounds in this single article of expenditure. Nor was his liberality confined to these channels. His ear was ever attentive to the tale of woe, his eye was keen to observe the miseries of the poor, the law of kindness was written upon his heart, and his hand was always ready to administer relief. The gains of his vicarage, of his fellowship, and of his patrimonial income (for his father died very rich,) were appropriated to support his liberality; and even his family plate was converted into clothes for his itinerant preachers.

But the most prominent feature in his character, was his unaffected humility, nor do we ever recolleet, in all our extensive acquaintance, a man so conscientious, so uniformly, and yet so pleasantly spiritual; in a word, in his parish he was a kind benefactor, and in his family a father rather than a master; in his ministry he was a burning and a shining light; in his promises he was scrupulously exact; in his devotions invariably regular; in his friendship inviolably faithful; and as in his life he was much beloved, so in his death he will be long lamented.

In January 1793, he intended to have again visited London, but instead of his presence, his friends received the disagreeable intelligence of his death. For some days previous to his decease his strength and health had visibly decreased, and on Sunday the 20th he came down into his parlor as usual, but with great difficulty reached his chamber in the evening. A few hours after he was in bed, he appeared to be seized with the symptons of immediate dissolution. His face was contracted and his speech faltered; and in this situation he continued till about 3 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, January 22, when breathing less and less, this champion for his Redeemer fell a victim to mortality in the 76th year of his age.

His frame of mind during his last hours appeared to have been peculiarly comfortable. The Rev. Mr. W. a clergyman

who resides near Everton, said, "Sir the Lord has enabled you to fight a good fight, and to finish a truly glorious course." He answered,—"Blessed be his holy name for it." It was also said to him, Jesus will soon call you up higher." He replied "Aye, aye, aye, higher, higher, higher." He once exclaimed, "Yes and my children too will shout and sing, *Here comes our father.*" On the ensuing Sabbath, his remains were interred in his own parish church-yard. The Rev. Mr. SIMEON, a pious clergyman of Cambridge, preached the funeral sermon from 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." Six neighbouring clergymen attended to bear his pall. The almost immense concourse of people, who assembled from all parts of the country to be present at this solemnity, the undissembled grief which was depicted upon every countenance, the tears which trickled down every cheek, were a melancholy, but expressive eulogium on his character, and should be considered as a just panegyric on his worth.

As he was never married, he left no widow to deplore his absence, nor children to perpetuate his memory; but his bright example and wise instructions will forever live in the affections of thousands, who derived blessings through his ministry.

The *Christian World Unmasked*, and a volume of Hymns called *Sion's Songs*, are the only works which he published. The latter was composed during his long indisposition, and will, we apprehend, be a profitable closet companion for all experienced christians.

AN EPITAPH

INSCRIBED ON HIS TOMBSTONE.

HERE LIE

THE EARTHLY REMAINS OF

JOHN BERRIDGE,

LATE VICAR OF EVERTON,

AND AN ITINERANT SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST,

WHO LOVED HIS MASTER AND HIS WORK;

AND, AFTER RUNNING ON HIS ERRANDS MANY YEARS,

WAS CAUGHT UP TO WAIT ON HIM ABOVE.

READER!

Art thou born again?

No salvation without a new birth.

I was born in sin, February, 1716,

Remained ignorant of my fallen state till 1630,

Lived proudly on faith and works for salvation till 1754,

Admitted to Everton vicarage 1755,

Fled to JESUS alone for refuge 1756,

Fell asleep in CHRIST January 22d, 1793.

THE

CHRISTIAN WORLD

UNMASKED.

GENTLE READER,

LEND me a chair, and I will sit down and talk a little with you. If my company proves unseasonable, or my discourse unsavory, you may be relieved from both by a single cast of your eye. No longer shall I continue talking, than you continue looking upon me. My visit will be long or short, just as you please, only while it lasts it should be friendly. I have no flattering words to give you, nor any alms to ask of you. I am come to inquire of your health, and would ask a few questions about it.

Indeed, Sir, I am a physician, was regularly bred to the business, have served more than three apprenticeships at a noted hall of physic, and consumed a deal of candle in lighting up a little understanding; yet am reviled as a mountebank, because I have been seen upon a stage. The Prince of physic set the fashion, and his example satisfies me, though it may not content another.

However, Sir, my business does not lay with the walls of your house, but with the tenant within. I

bring no advice to strengthen your clay, but wish to see your spirit healed, and to set the heavenly lamp a burning. Give me leave to feel your pulse—sick indeed, Sir, very sick, and of a mortal disease; received from your parents, and which infects your whole mass of blood. *There is no health in you:* and since you seem not sensible of the malady, I must pronounce you delirious.

Why, you frighten me, Doctor. Sure you were bred at Sion College, with Doctor Whitefield and his brethren. A very hard mouthed race truly! who have dealt so much in emetics, no genteel people will employ them. Their practice layeth chiefly among the poor, who can bear banging.

However, since you are come upon a friendly visit I will tell you honestly what I think of myself. I have my faults as well as my neighbors; but my appetites are pretty well bridled. My heart is honest, quite willing to pay all men their due; my hands too are sometimes disposed to relieve a neighbor's want; and my feet go orderly to church on a sunday, when the bells chime, except it proves a rainy day; and then I read the weekly paper, or a Bible chapter at home, just as it suits my fancy. This I call a regular life, and it is the ground of my hope, not forgetting Jesus Christ, to help out some defects. For I am choleric, no doubt, but it quickly bloweth over; and a little apt to fib in a market, but who can help it? All my neighbors do the same; and my landlord who talks much of his honor, will tell a fib upon occasion as well as myself. Besides, I often bring the parish into good temper when they are out of sorts, by talking in a kind and humorous way, so that I am really

a peace maker. Now from these circumstances it should seem, that I am not mortally sick as you suppose, but enjoy good christian health. Yet I do not like your countenance, it looks so cloudy. What is the matter, Doctor?

Sir, I am grieved at the weak account you have given of yourself. It convinces me you are not sick but dead; dead to God and to his spiritual service. I expected some account of a true christian, and you put me off with the state of a poor heathen, who is somewhat sober and honest and charitable, and worships his God when the weather suits or his inclination serves. I find no trace of a spiritual mind, no taste of a gospel blessing, no earnest of a future inheritance. God's word, I see, is not your sweet companion, his service not your true delight, his glory not your noble aim. Your religion floats upon the surface, like froth upon the water, and is a mere vanity. God has yet no hold of your heart, and you cannot give it him.

If you were a child of God, his spirit would instruct you to love and reverence him with the affections of a child; and by prayer to converse with him daily, as children converse with their parents.

If God were your Father, you would love his house. It would be dear unto you, and a little rain would no more keep you from his courts, than from a fair or market. Where should a child go but to his Father's house? And if a child of God, you would say as David did, "How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord! a day in thy courts is better than a thousand spent elsewhere."

If you were a real subject of Christ, the kingdom

which you ask for, in his short prayer, would come and be set up within you; a kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. He would enable you, not only to profess him, but to love and serve him, and fix your whole dependance upon him. Your bosom would become his presence chamber, where he would manifest himself to you, as he does not to the world; and your heart would be his throne, where he would sit to sanctify your affections, to regulate your tempers, and subdue you to himself.

Jesus Christ is not a pasteboard king, with royal titles but without authority. He sits upon his holy hill, invested with all power to captivate the hearts of his subjects, and execute his threatened vengeance on his adversaries. And where he brings men under the sway of his sceptre, he bestows the blessings of his kingdom. The Holy Spirit as a comforter is granted; the peace passing all understanding, is given; and God's love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. These jewels are dug only out of gospel mines, and set only in the breast of gospel subjects. And where they are well set, Jesus Christ becomes exceeding dear to such. They know the purchase price he paid, and having tasted of the blessings, they love his person and adore his grace. Paul and they are now agreed, to know only Jesus Christ and him crucified. He is their song and boast, their peace and hope, their all in all.

Let me draw my chair a little closer, Sir; plain dealing is exceeding needful here. If you are not a real subject of Jesus Christ, you must be a stranger to the blessings of his kingdom. The jewels I have mentioned are not locked up in your cabinet; they

are not bestowed upon the outward court worshippers. You must come within the veil, which is now rent open for access, before you view a reconciled Father and feast upon his grace.

A decent walk will keep you from mistrusting your condition, and these heavenly comforts may be thought too rich for a state of pilgrimage, and the remnant who possess them, may be deemed a little brain sick, quite unworthy of your notice. Perhaps the first Christians may have tasted of these blessings, but you think the gospel wine which was broached at first, is now run out, and nothing left for us to sip but the lees. Thus you are fortified in satan's castle of security; your conscience when it cries is rocked fast asleep; and with a mask of a decent profession, you live a stranger to Christ's kingdom, and perish in your sins.

Nay, Sir, do not start away, but keep your seat, and give my words a little chewing. Let conscience speak, it has an honest voice, though a coarse one; and if you cannot bear handling, it is a sign that you have ulcers within, which are not less dangerous for being healed over. I must probe again to make you feel them; and if my master guide my hand, I shall reach the quick, and hear you cry as a perfect man of old did, "Behold I am vile!"

Whilst you remain a stranger to Christ's inward kingdom, you are with all your outward decency, but a painted tomb full of all uncleanness. And because the walls of your house have had a white wash, and hide its inward pollution from your fellow creatures, you care not much about that eye of God, which views your heart, and views it with abhorrence. Your bosom is a cage of unclean birds, and you dearly love

their chirping, and feed them with your own hand. In this retired chamber you riot in uncleanness, and if your thoughts were all exposed to the world, you would almost die with shame. And yet, perhaps, so void of shame as to think yourself a chaste person, if no outward acts of uncleanness are committed. Oh, Sir, how can your heart, your filthy heart appear before God, an holy God? Do you read the bible? There I find it written, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." You are satisfied with clean hands, a decent profession; but God requires a clean heart, and none shall see his face without it.

But, Sir, your breast is a den of thieves too. A dark and dirty den, where self will and self sufficiency the head of the gang, are up in arms against God, rejecting his authority, breaking down his fences, and laying his enclosures common. A den where anger, envy, pride, railing, lying, discontent and worldliness have stripped your bosom of its heavenly furniture, and turned God's ancient house into a market. What was God's court is now a den, where distraction lifts her clamorous voice, and violence deals her heavy hand. So that a man's worst foes are they of his own house, the thieves that lodge within his breast.

Sir, if Jesus Christ kept his court in your bosom, he would make peace there, for he is the prince of peace. Where he reigns, he does command peace, for the honor of his name as Saviour, and for the glory of his government as King. But how can you suppose that Christ is your King, when he lets your house be daily rifled by a gang of thieves? A gracious prince will not endure to see his subjects ravaged daily, when he has sufficient power to protect them.

And with what conscience can you call yourself a subject of Christ Jesus, when your bosom is a sturdy rebel and content to be so? You might as well call me your prince, as Jesus Christ your king, if he does not rule within your breast; and might as properly call me your maker, as Christ your Saviour, if he does not save you from your sins. Where he rules as King, and shews himself a Saviour, he will purge the conscience by his blood from guilt, and hallow well the heart by his spirit. He will cleanse the cage, and scour the den; and when a wanton bird presumes to chirp, he will wring its neck off; or if a rogue assault your house, his palace, he will apprehend the thief, and sentence him to Tyburn. Nay, it is a fixed rule with him, that whosoever harbors thieves, shall have his house pulled down, and a dreadful fire set to it, which burns and never will be quenched.

If my expressions ever wear an air of pleasantry, it is because I would tempt you by a smile to hear me out. My subject is weighty, but may seem too grave, as the modern taste goes, without a little seasoning. Well, Sir, what think you of yourself? Are you a real subject of Jesus Christ, or an alien? Indeed, Doctor, more is lacking in me than I thought. I have been resting on a decent conduct and my sunday prayers, but something still I find is wanting, and the main thing too. The house which I built seemed a creditable house, and was thought to be as good as the vicar's, for we both built of the same materials. But I perceive at length there are no windows in the house, nor any furniture in the chambers. And no wonder if a dark house become a den of thieves, for they love the night and dwell in darkness. However, I am now

provided with some light for the windows, and must seek out furniture for the chambers. I would not willingly miscarry in this matter, because it is of moment. And it would be sad indeed, after building and repairing all my days, to have the house upon my head at last. But I trust by the help of a good will and a lusty arm of my own, to fray the birds away, dislodge the gang, and furnish well my house. What think you now, Doctor? Do I not talk like a man?

Yes, Sir, very much like a heathen man and a publican. You swagger like a Cannaanite, but Cannaanites, though giants, were overcome and slain. If you find no better help than your own will and your own arm, your house will be down at last, and bury you in its ruins.

Men are strangers to the spiritual nature of God's law, and to the woeful depravity of the human heart, and therefore entertain a meagre notion of religion, and a lofty thought of their own ability. If Christian faith is nothing but a mere assent to the gospel word, every man may make himself a true believer when he please. And if christian duty consists only in Sunday service, with a pittance of sobriety and honesty and charity, we might expect that men would vaunt of will and power to make themselves religious. And yet the generalty are much defective here. They often talk of turning over new leaves, but their future life proves such talk is empty boast, and that they want a will and power for this slender reformation. All allow that nothing is more needful to be done; and nothing can account for its being left undone, but a want of human will and strength to do it.

Let me step into your closet, Sir, and peep upon its

furniture. My hands are pretty honest, you may trust me, and nothing will be found, I fear, to tempt a man to be a thief.—Well to be sure, what a closet is here! Never swept for certain, since you was christened! And what a fat idol stands skulking in the corner! A favorite sin, I warrant it! How it simpers and seems as pleasant as a right eye! Can you find a will to part with it, or strength to pluck it out? And supposing you a match for this self-denial, can you so command your heart as to hate the sin you do forsake? This is certainly required; truth is called for in the inward parts; God will have sin not only cast aside, but cast away with abhorrence. So he speaks, "Ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate evil."

It is easy to affirm we have ability for this, and then dispute about it eagerly; yet who makes the trial? I have made it many times, and find I can do nothing to good purpose. Others seem well satisfied with supposing they have power, but make no thorough trial. Else they would find and confess that they can effectually do nothing.

If the wanton nightingale is put out of your cage on a Sunday morning, she will be taken in again at night. Your heart will pine for her midnight whistle, and cannot hate her note nor think it half so horrid as the hissing of a serpent, though far more so.

Can you find a pleasant heart to love your enemies and pray for them, and do them good? Perhaps you may compel yourself to shew them kindness, and this is sooner said than done. Yet shewing kindness to an enemy is one thing, and feeling kindness for him is another; and both are equally required. Pray make a trial here of your boasted will and power, and see

if they do not prove of brittle metal and snap between your fingers. You own yourself a mortal man, notwithstanding all your mighty strength, and expect a mansion in the skies when you quit this house of clay. But, Sir, you must be taught the work of heaven, before you can be settled there. An earthly heart could no more live in heaven than a fish upon dry land; the element is too fine for both, they cannot breathe in such an atmosphere.

Grace is the blossom-bud of glory, and a work of grace upon the heart is a needful preparation for glory. By grace men are brought into the school of Christ, and bound apprentices for heaven. In this school they learn to walk with God, to love him, and to serve him—to be strangers upon earth, and seek a better country; looking for the coming of the Son of God. These are some scripture marks of the heirs of glory. Do you find them in your breast? or can you stamp them there? Indeed you cannot. None but he who turned water into wine, can change your earthly nature to an heavenly. You must be born from above, before you learn to crave and truly seek the things above. You may peruse the word of God, but can you say with David, "Lord, how love I thy law, it is my meditation all the day."

When a bible and newspaper are found upon your table, I can guess which your hand will take up first, and you know the heart directs the hands. The worldly magazine is sweeter to your taste than the heavenly leaves. You may force and drive your thoughts on heavenly things; but can you set your heart upon them? If so, your thoughts and talk would glide on heavenly things most pleasantly, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

But is this your case, or the case of others who are reckoned decent people? You know it is not. They have no liking for religious subjects, and find no power to introduce them. Conversation turns upon the earth, because the heart is earthly. Religious talk is unfashionable, because it is unsuitable to our fallen nature. We do not care to think or talk of God, our daily benefactor, because we are not born of God, and have no filial kindness for him. His blessings are received daily, and the author most politely is forgotten. No mention must be made of him who gave us all we have, and keeps us what we are. To talk of God upon a visit, would turn the hearers sick or sour, and brand the speaker for a rude man. All ingratitude is reckoned infamous, except ingratitude to God. Such is human nature, and such the kind religion of it.

What makes the curate give a scanty sermon? And what makes the people love to have it so? The reason, Sir, is plain. A sunday dinner is more savoury than the word of God.

But, Sir, if your house is furnished, as you threaten, then your parlor, shop and closet must be lined with devotion; this is christian furniture. Can you pray, and find sweet fellowship with God in prayer? You talk of will and power; if they are at hand, why are they not in exercise? I call that man a boaster, and suspect his poverty, who talketh of his riches, yet never pays his debts. No work is more needful, more profitable, or more honorable than prayer, and when rightly performed, none is more delightful; why then is it not more followed? Indeed, Sir, you have no disposition to pray, till God poureth out a spirit of grace and supplication on you. You may force your

lips to say a prayer, and say it often, but cannot force your heart to like it. The work is irksome, mighty irksome, it drags on heavily, like a jaded mill-horse, who is whipped round and round, but longs to be released from his gears. A manger suits him better than a collar.

And can God be pleased with that service which your own heart loatheth? No, Sir, he requires a cheerful service, the obedience of sons and not of slaves. He says, Give me thy heart; and his people are a willing people, made willing by his grace.

But supposing that a little will for prayer might be squeezed from a flinty heart, you have no power still to compass fellowship with God. And what is prayer without divine communion? A mere prating to a dead wall or blue sky. It is babbling to an unknown god, as four hundred and fifty prophets did to Baal, from morning until evening, but found no answer. Baal kept no fellowship with his votaries then, and never has done since.

Praying unto God without communion, is like talking to a man who neither gives an answer, nor a smile, nor yet a look. You would soon be weary of such converse, and avoid such company. And no people find an heart to pray who feel no fellowship with God.

You often hear at church St. Paul's parting prayer, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you." By nature we are far from God, sin has made the separation. And till brought nigh to him, we cannot say with them of old, "We have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." It is one office of the Holy Spirit to draw our spirit near to God, and give us fellowship with him.

This fellowship is not obtained by a mere profession of the gospel, however decent that profession is, but by regeneration, or a spiritual birth. Where the Holy Spirit has imparted spiritual life, he instructs a sinner how to pray, helps his infirmities in praying, draws the human spirit nigh to God, and gives communion with him. Thus the heart is strengthened and refreshed by prayer, and finds it both a pleasant and a profitable service. But where communion is not felt, nor truly sought, no comfort can be found in prayer, nor profit. And this is much the case of modern christianity, a dull insipid thing, void of spiritual life, and therefore void of spiritual feeling. Professors do not make pretence unto it, but disclaim it. So far indeed they are honest; but being destitue of spiritual life and feeling, they must be called gospel puppets, danced with devotional wires. A church is fitted up for their stage, with boxes, pit and gallery; and Sunday is the day of acting.

Yet further; men have no heart to pray, because they have no feeling of their wants. If I am, or fancy that I am, endowed with will and power to help myself, it seems a needless thing to beg of God to give me grace, as needless as to ask his help to light my candle. And where men boast of native strength, I do suppose they act consistently, and seldom chafe a knee in prayer. Common decency requires a little outward homage, and a little will suffice.

Now, Sir, be pleased to hear what my dispensatory says concerning will and power. "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do; and he works the will and power not for our desert, but merely of his own good pleasure. God stands in debt to none;

and his works are not designed to reward man's merit, but to manifest his glorious grace.

When your will is turned from evil, or inclined to good, it is the Lord's doing. He over-rules the will, though not asked of him, nor perceived by you. This may be gathered from the text above cited, and is confirmed by the following story.

Abraham comes to Gerar, and through fear denies his wife. Abimelech sends for Sarah to his house, purposing to take her to his bed; but when she comes, he is somehow wholly overruled. God appears to Abimelech in a dream, and says, "Thou art a dead man, for the woman thou hast taken is a man's wife." Abimelech protests his heart is upright, and his hands are innocent. God allows it, and says, "I know thou hast done this in the integrity of thine heart;" but then he shews the cause of this integrity, "For I withheld thee from sinning against me, therefore I suffered thee not to touch her." In Abimelech we behold the doctrine of nature. He vaunts of his integrity, as modern christians do, and is just as ignorant of God's determining his will, and of course as unthankful for that determination, as modern christians are. We need not wonder at it; nature is the same at all times and in all dispensations; grace alone makes the difference.

Hence real christians learn to seek for will and power from God, and give him hearty praise for all escapes from evil, and for every good desire wrought n them, and for all good works performed by them. As for you, Sir, and others who can turn yourselves round by your own will and power, as nimbly as a floating weathercock, I wish the weeping prophet's

prayer was much upon your lips, "Turn thou me, O Lord, and so shall I be turned."

But, Sir, you call yourself an honest man, and honest men will pay their debts; you own yourself a sinner too, and sins are debts due to God: How are these debts to be discharged? They are a most enormous sum, and when felt prove a heavy load, and if not cancelled, must bring eternal ruin. Do you think of this matter, Sir? It is a weighty business.

Yes, yes, Doctor, I have had some thoughts about it, and do not apprehend much danger or much trouble here. I must repent, and amend, and do what I can; and Christ will do the rest. Some debts I shall pay myself, a decent part of the shot, and Jesus must discharge the rest of the reckoning. This is our parish way of paying sinful debts, and seems a very good way. We desire no better, and only wish to pay our neighbor's debts as easily. What think you of it, Doctor? sure you can have no objection here.

Indeed, Sir, this way of paying sinful debts, as easy as it seems to you, would ruin me effectually. "The wages of sin is death," and if I must pay off only one sin, I am ruined; for that debt is death. So of course I die, and perish. No help is found for me in this way. Either I must be forgiven wholly, or wholly be undone.

This method of payment would make you a bankrupt presently, and ruin you eternally. Pray examine it a little closer. First, you talk of repenting. True repentance goes before forgiveness. But you speak as if repentance was your own work; whereas the bible says it is the gift of God, and Jesus is exalted up on high to give it. You had better pray for re-

pentance, than try to squeeze it from a millstone, and such is every heart by nature. No kind relenting is found there, till Jesus sends it. What your own hands bestow can avail you nothing, but will need to be repented of. And where God gives repentance, it is never meant to purchase pardon. For tears pay no debts. They will not pay your neighbor's, and much less God's, which are weighty debts indeed.

Repentance is designed to make the heart loathe sin, through a sense of its deep pollution, and dread sin through a feeling of its guilty burden. Thus the heart becomes acquainted with its nakedness and ruin, is broke down and humbled, and forced to fly to Jesus Christ, and seek deliverance by grace alone. Nor is the business quickly done. When the heart is conscious of its misery, it will try a thousand legal tricks, but wearied out at length with endless disappointment, it falls at Jesus' feet, and meekly takes up Peter's prayer, Lord, save, or I perish.

After repenting, you talk of amending. Ay, to be sure, no repentance can be true without amendment. But you seem to think your heart only wants amending, and may be mended just as easy as your coat. Truly Sir, it wants new making, and no real mending can be found without new making. All the rest is varnish which may please yourself, and satisfy a neighbor, but will not pass with God. A blackmoor painted white, is but a blackmoor still; and gives the image of a decent modern christian. Your conduct may be much reformed, but your heart, unless created new, will be full of earthliness and all uncleanness, and remain satan's workshop still. No thorough change is made until the work begins above, and God creates

the heart anew. When repentance is bestowed David's prayer will suit you well, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." Nay, be not offended at David, your heart and eyes are teeming with uncleanness too, and make you stand in woeful need of David's prayer.

But supposing God should bless you with a new heart and right spirit, and thereby cause you to walk in his statutes, still I ask what becomes of past arrears? No compensation is yet made for former trespasses. Doing present duty cannot pay off past debts; yet these debts must be discharged, or you are ruined, and you have no overplus to pay a single debt; nay, you are running deeper into debt daily, by doing what you ought not, and leaving undone what you ought to do. Still your deserved wages every day and every hour is death. Let me remind you once again of Peter's prayer, Lord save, or I perish.

Lastly, you say, I must do what I can, and Christ will do the rest. This is the common cry, the general run; and is thought a safe and easy passage for a christian. But the passage is too strait and hazardous for me; I dare not venture my own soul upon it. Supposing you have will and power for duty, then I ask, Do you pray as much as you can? or read the scripture as much as you can, or relieve the poor as much as you can, or visit the sick as much as you can? Do you deny yourself as much as you can, and watch against sin as much as you can, or do any one duty as much as you can? Indeed you do not, and you know you do not. But if you put salvation on this footing, of doing what you can, and have not done it, what sentence can you look for from the Lord but this? "Out of thine own mouth I will judge thee."

If this plea, of doing what you can, will not abide a trial, no other plea remains but doing what you will, or what you please, and making Jesus Christ do all the rest. But you dare not urge this plea, it is too shameful and barefaced for any mortal to avow it. Now, Sir, if you are not able to abide the trial of doing what you can, and dare not urge the shameful plea of doing what you will; how is it possible for you to be saved by your doings? Either a full pardon and a free salvation must be granted through Jesus Christ alone, or you are undone by your doings, cast and lost forever.

Perhaps you think that Christ came to shorten man's duty, and make it more feasible, by shoving a commandment out of Moses' tables, as the papists have done, or by clipping and paring all the commandments as the moralists do. Thus *sincere* obedience, instead of *perfect*, is now considered as the law of works.

But, Sir, if Jesus Christ came to shorten man's duty, he came to give us a license to sin. For duty cannot be shortened without breaking commandments. And thus Christ becomes a minister of sin with a witness, and must be ranked at the head of antinomian preachers. And what do you mean by sincere obedience; It is a pretty expression, and serves many pretty purposes. It sears a conscience notably, wonderfully; and has so vague a meaning, it will signify any thing, or nothing, just as you please. It is satan's catch-word for the gospel, and upon his gates might be truly written, *Room for sincere obedience.*

But what is it? If sincere obedience means any thing, it must signify either doing what you can, or doing what you will. So we are got on the old swampy ground, are sinking apace into a quagmire, and shall be strangled presently unless we retire.

Jesus Christ is so far from intending to pare away Moses' tables, that he carries every commandment to its utmost extent. A wanton look is declared to be adultery; and a wrathful heart is deemed murder; and the man, who calls his neighbor a fool, is threatened with hell-fire. This does not look like shortening man's duty, and making it sit more easy on a squeamish stomach. Surely this preaching cries out mainly against sincere obedience; a doctrine sweetly framed to set the heavenly gates wide open for drunkards and all men.

Jesus says expressly, that he did not come to destroy the law, by weakening or shortening Moses' tables; and he assures us, that whoever shall break the least commandment, and teach men to do so, shall be least in the kingdom of heaven, or farthest from it.

If another witness is needful, we may call in St. James, who is just at hand, and a favorite with the champions for works and sincere obedience. But the good apostle happens to be rather sturdy in this matter, and declares that if a man should keep the whole law, except in one point, he is yet guilty of all. A failure in a single article ruins him. Whoever breaks the least command, or neglects the least duty, thereby procures to himself as solid a title to eternal misery, as the man who breaks all the commandments every day of his life. Which is designed to shew the absolute impossibility of being justified in any manner by our works.

Why, Doctor, you amaze me mightily. I never heard such language in my life before. Our parish Doctor does not treat his patients in this rough manner. Surely you have overshot the mark. What is

really just and equitable among men, is just and equitable with God. And is any thing found among men that bears a resemblance to this proceeding of God?

Yes, Sir, enough is found in every country, and in your own land, to justify God herein. Many crimes are punished with death in Britain, and the punishment is inflicted for a single crime. The law does not inquire, whether you have offended often, but whether you have offended once. It tries you for a single offence; and if found guilty, will condemn you without mercy. Now if human laws are not taxed with injustice, though they doom a man to die for a single act of treason, murder, robbery, or forgery, why should God's law be thought unjust because it punishes a a single crime with death?

However, you must not mistake St. James' meaning. He does affirm that a single breach of God's law deserves eternal death, as well as ten thousand; yet he does not say, that small and great offenders will have equal punishment. No: mighty sinners will be mightily tormented. Men's future torment will be suited to the number and the greatness of their crimes. Yet moderate offenders can have small consolation from hence, because the shortest punishment is eternal, and the coldest place in hell will prove a hot one.

Sir, by your countenance, I perceive you are not yet disposed to renounce sincere obedience. And though unable to maintain your ground, you are not willing to give up your arms, and ask quarter, to save your life. Let the matter take a little more sifting. You seemed to complain of God, for making death the wages of a single sin; but you might have rea-

son to complain, if God had made sincere obedience a condition of salvation, because no man understands what it means. Much talked of it is, like the good man in the moon, yet none could ever ken it. I dare defy the scribes and all the lawyers in the world to tell me truly what sincere obedience is. Whether it means the doing half my duty, or three quarters, or one quarter, or one fiftieth, or one hundredth part. Where must we draw the line of sincere obedience? It surely needs a magic wand to draw it. And can we think that God would leave a matter of such moment at such dreadful hazard? Whatever is made a condition in a human or divine covenant, be that condition less or more, sincere or perfect obedience, it must be executed punctually, from first to last, or the covenant is forfeited. On this account, conditions in a covenant always are, and must be marked out precisely. Yet here, sincere obedience is called a condition, and no one knows what it is; nor will allow this poor unmeaning thing, whatever it is, to be absolutely binding. It is a condition and no condition; just as much grace as you choose, and as many or as few good works as you please. O fine condition! Surely satan was the author of it.

When human law-givers judge a crime deserveth death, and make it capital, they always draw the line of death, and mark the crime exactly, that all may know what it is, and when they do commit it. And if God hath made sincere obedience the condition of salvation, he would certainly have drawn the line, and marked out the boundary precisely, because our life depended on it.

If some Utopian prince should frame a body of laws

and declare that every one, who did not keep the laws sincerely, as well as ever he could, should die, this pleasant sanction would make a dull Bæotian grin; and when the judges took a circuit in this fairy land, each assize would prove a maiden one, no doubt. Now if such a constitution would be hooted at among men, as the utmost foolishness of folly, can we think the wise God would adopt such a system?

Sincere obedience is called the condition of salvation; but God has drawn no line to mark the boundary; therefore every man must draw the line for himself. Now, sir, observe the consequence: mark how this ravelled clew winds up, and shews its filthy bottom. One prays on Sundays, but at no other time; that is his line of devotion. Another only prays in a tempest: that is his line. And a third will only pray when sick or dying.—One is mellow once a week, and staggers home, but keeps upon his legs; that is his line of sobriety. Another gets much tipsy every night, but drinks no spirituous liquors; that is his line. And a third will take a dram stoutly, but declares sincerely that he cannot help it; he should be dead without it. What must we say to these things? They are all condemned; but if God has drawn no boundary, man must draw it, and will draw it, where he pleaseth. Sincere obedience thus becomes a nose of wax; and is so fingered, as to fit exactly every human face. I look upon this doctrine as the devil's master-piece, the most ingenious trap that ever was contrived by him. Where other woful doctrines slay a thousand, this will slay ten thousand. Talking of sincere obedience, and of doing what we can, is mighty plausible: it sounds well, and looks decent;

but opens a dreadful sluice for the profligate, and erects a noble pillar for the deist.

I cannot think that the growth of deism is chiefly owing to the growth of immorality. A person will not surely choose to be a deist, because he grows more wicked; he will not merely reject Jesus Christ, because he stands in more need of him. But a man becomes a deist, by hearing of sincere obedience, and believing there is merit in it. Now the price of merit is not fixed in a protestant market; it is much talked of, but not rated. He therefore sets what price he pleaseth on his own merit; and pays his heavy debts off, as a neighbouring state once did, by raising the currency of his coin. Thus, though we may have been enormously wicked, yet by the fancied merit of a few good works in life, or by a charitable sum bequeathed at his death, he goes in a fiery chariot up to heaven, unless he chance to be kidnapped in the way by satan.

If works are a condition in the gospel covenant, then works must make the whole of it. Sincere obedience, as a condition, will lead you unavoidably up to perfect obedience. No intermediate point can be assigned, where you may stop. All the commands of God are enforced by the same authority. He that saith, commit no adultery, saith also, do not kill. And if you allow one duty to be absolutely binding, you must allow all the rest. For they all stand upon the same footing.

But perhaps you think, though all the commands of God are binding, they bind only to a certain degree: and hence the gospel covenant is called the covenant of grace. Then I ask, sir, what is that degree?

How far must we go, and where may we stop? You cannot mark the limit, and God does assign none. Yet if this had been the tenor of the gospel covenant, he would have marked that degree precisely, because my life depended upon knowing it.

What saith your Bible? How readest thou? Does it allow you to be guilty of adultery or murder, or blasphemy, or perjury, or theft to a certain degree? Indeed it does not. Or may you indulge a measure of anger, or envy, or malice, or lying? Indeed you may not. My testament says, "Put away from you all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, with all malice." And it commands you not only to abstain from all evil, but from all appearance of it.

Thus you can neither exclude any kind of duty, nor any degree of each kind. But the moment you seek to be justified in any measure by obedience, that moment you fall from grace, and become a debtor to do the whole law.

God has proposed no more than two covenants. The first was wholly of works, which says do and live; and gives the man a title unto life, who shall keep the law perfectly. The second covenant is wholly of grace, which says believe and be saved. In this covenant, salvation is fully purchased by Jesus Christ, and freely applied to the sinner by his Spirit. Grace lays the foundation, and grace brings forth the top stone with shouting. Glory be to God for this grace.

Now the first covenant is allowed on all hands to be too hard; and the second is thought by most to be too easy, and would fall to pieces, unless shoared up by sincere obedience. Accordingly by the help

of this rotten buttress, men have patched up a third covenant, consisting partly of works and partly of grace. In which the sinner owns himself indebted something, he knows not what, to Jesus Christ; and takes the rest, be what it will, to himself. The captain and the soldier make a joint purse, and purchase a crown between them. The soldier wins some gold to make the crown, and Jesus studs it round with diamonds. O rare soldier! He must not ascribe salvation unto God and the Lamb, as the saints do, but to the Lamb and the soldier.

This mixed covenant is the darling of nature. It both cherisheth our vanity, and opens a door for licentiousness. The judaizing Christians, mentioned in the Acts, were the first who began to adulterate the gospel, by blending the covenants, and seeking to be justified by faith and works conjointly. They did not consider the precepts of the gospel, as a rule of life, but as a bond of the covenant. And they were led into this error partly by a constitutional pride which is common to all; and partly by a national prejudice which was peculiar to themselves. Moses had been their law-giver, and works were the letter of his covenant. Of course they would be tenacious of a law of works, and as unwilling to give up their old law giver, as an husband is to part with the wife of his youth. Moses had reigned long over them, and they gloried in being his disciple; but Jesus now would be their king. And like a besieged people, who are driven to the last extremity, if they cannot keep the conqueror out, they will make the best terms they can for themselves and their prince.

If Moses must not reign alone, he shall be seated near the conqueror, and they will swear fealty to both.

Wherever these judaizing Christians came and found men disposed, as they are naturally, for the mixed covenant. they always preached circumcision to them, saying, except ye be circumcised, ye cannot be saved. And they preached right, if the gospel be a mixed covenant of faith and works. For in such a covenant, there is just the same reason for circumcision as for baptism. If you desire benefit from the covenant of grace, you must be baptized; and if you seek advantage from the covenant of works, you must be circumcised. A rite of initiation is appointed unto both the covenants; and you cannot enter into both without partaking of the double rite.

Are you free of the mercer's company, and desirous to be incorporated among the sadler's? You must undergo a second initiation. The former rites have made you a free mercer, but cannot make you a free sadler. So, if you join mount Sinai to mount Sion, and would partake of benefit from both the covenants, you must undergo a double initiation, because the rites are different. Baptism will no more admit you into Moses' temple than circumcision can receive you into the church of Christ.

Allowing therefore that the gospel covenant is a mixed one, of works and grace, the judaizing Christians did not preach amiss, when they said, except ye be circumcised, ye cannot be saved. You expect say they, a share of your salvation from the covenant of works; but no profit can you have from that covenant, till you have fairly entered it by circumcision.

And does it not seem equitable, in this mixed cove-

nant, that the Sabbath should be equally divided between the Jewish service and the gospel worship? You are half a Jew in heart, Sir, though not in profession; and have abundantly more cause to sacrifice a bullock to Jehovah, than the wise man of Athens had to kill a cock for Esculapius, and thus at his death infatuate the doctrine of his life.

Sincere obedience is no where mentioned in the gospel as a *condition* of salvation. But if it were a condition, sure it would have been expressly mentioned, because of its high importance. Yet the Bible is not only silent in this matter, but asserts the contrary. St. Paul declares roundly, "We are saved by grace through faith; not of works, lest any man should boast." The reason added, Lest any man should boast, plainly shuts out all works of sincere obedience, as a condition. For though these works are often small enough, yet if the condition is fulfilled by them, such is human vanity, they would afford a ground for boasting. Therefore, to dig the whole cankered root of merit up, and give all the glory of salvation unto God and the Lamb, the apostle says absolutely, It is of grace, not of works. Works have no share in the covenant of grace as a condition of life, they are only the fruit of salvation freely bestowed, and the genuine evidence of a true faith, which works by love.

Again, if because obedience is inculcated in the covenant of grace, it is thought to be required as a condition of salvation, and though not mentioned expressly, is certainly intended; I ask what is the condition? It his highly needful for me to know it, and to know it perfectly, because my life depends upon it. I suppose sincere obedience must mean something short of per-

fect. Pray, Sir, how much short? Half an inch, or half a mile? Where must I draw my line, and fix my staff? The Bible has not told me, and you cannot tell me, nor all the scribes in Christendom. So I am brought to a fine pass! Here my life depends on a condition, which must be performed, and I know nothing of it, nor can know, and yet am ruined if I take a step too short. Oh, Sir, if sincere obedience had been a condition of salvation, God would certainly have shewn me how much short it comes of perfect; and have marked out the line exactly, whither I must go, and where I must stop.

Further, you describe sincere obedience, by doing what you can; and thus explain one loose expression by another full as loose. I call the expression loose, not merely for its loose meaning, but for its loose tendency. And here we may behold the subtility of satan, who blinds our eyes with such expressions, as bear a decent conntenance, and seem to have a meaning, yet leave us wholly in the dark, or leave us at full liberty to put any soft construction on them. Yet if men were honest, they might see that doing what they *can*, means nothing more in plain English, than doing what they *will;* and if they are tried by the rule of doing what they can, they must all be condemned, because they daily do such things as they need not and ought not, and leave undone other things which they might do and ought to do.

Here it may be noted, that what is called by plain men, sincere obedience, is entitled by the scribes a remedial law, or the law of love. They are all cankered branches from the same cankered stock; and their number is convenient. A troop looks well

They serve as pretty loop holes, to play at hide and seek in. No wonder that the foot is often shifted, when the ground is miry. Men will make an hundred kind of laws, but God has only two, the law of works, and the law of faith. And what has been urged against sincere obedience, equally affects a remedial law, the law of love, and all their Jewish kindred. They must stand or fall together.

Lastly, sincere obedience, as a condition, can only terminate in perfect obedience. No middle point can be assigned, where you may stop. No kind of duty can be excluded, nor any degree of each kind. Thus you are unavoidably thrust upon a perfect law of works, and become a debtor to do the whole law. And if you dare not rest on a perfect obedience unceasingly performed from the first day to the last, there is no other resting for you, but on Jesus Christ alone. He must be your all; and he will be your all, or nothing.

Thus I have gathered up my ends, respecting this matter; and I trust you see at length, that sincere obedience is nothing but a jack o' lanthorn, dancing here and there and every where; no man could ever catch him, but thousands have been lost by following him. A cripple might as well rest upon his shadow for support; as your heart depend upon the phantom of sincere obedience.

Your mixed covenant is a mere bubble, blown up by the breath of pride. It has neither got a foot in heaven, nor a foot on earth, but is pendulous in the air, and rests upon a castle floating in the clouds, which threatens downfal and ruin every moment. Woe be to the man that is seated on it. Yet this cas-

tle, though the fabric of a vision, is the glory of a modern christian; and, being built upon the clouds, has been reckoned safe from gun shot; but I trust the cloud is burst, and the phantom disappears.

Indeed Doctor, I begin to perceive my old sweetheart sincere obedience! is a very sorry hussey. Yet her face is so plausible, and her speech so winning, none would suspect her for a jilt. She must be packed off; but what shall I do, when she is turned out of doors? You have jostled me out of my easy chair, and now I have not a stool to sit upon. My own obedience will afford no sort of title under heaven; where then must I find a title? Besides I do not understand your doctrine, though I must give up my own. Sometimes you preach up Moses stoutly, and then suddenly Jesus Christ is all in all. One while you talk notably of being born again, and then presently you seem to speak as if my own obedience was only fit to destroy me. Pray explain yourself, and do not leave me in the dark. You have blown my candle out, and in civility should lend your lanthorn.

Nay Sir, candle light will not serve you here: sun light is wanted; rays from the sun of righteousness, or you can continue dark, notwithstanding all that I can say. May this light be granted.

The law is preached for two reasons, as a schoolmaster, to bring men unto Christ, that they may be justified by faith; and secondly, as a rule of life to walk with Christ, but as no condition of salvation.

N B.—The judicious reader will perceive, that I have not wrote against sincere obedience, as it is the genuine fruit and a necessary evidence of faith, but only decry it as a condition of salvation.

Jesus Christ has no business with a pharisee, who can plead his own righteousness; he came to seek and save them that are lost. And the moral law must be preached in its utmost rigour, to awaken every sort of sinners, and convince them of their lost estate. When the law is set home by the Holy Spirit, it becomes a schoolmaster, sharp indeed, and scourges sinners unto Christ. The fox is then unkennelled, an driven from his old haunt, sincere obedience, the common refuge and convenient screen for drunkards, fornicators, liars, thieves, and simpering deists, who are all at their wits end presently, when they find their thatched hovel in a blaze.

No sooner is the rigour of the law perceived by the understanding, and felt in the conscience, but it forces every one to say, as St. Paul did, When the commandment came, came home to my heart, I died, all hope of life through my own obedience perished. And they can take up Paul's lamentation, a mighty strange one to a modern christian, who has got no feeling, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death."

Now they know by good experience, that death is the wages of sin: and feel themselves in a state of condemnation. This makes them dread sin, and free to part with it; because it has lost its painted cheek, and shews its hagged countenance. The prayers of the church become very suitable and welcome. The frequent supplication of, "Lord, have mercy on us," is neither loathsome nor tiresome. The much repeated cry, "for mercy on us miserable sinners," is not thought a cry too much. And those strong communion words, "the remembrance of our sins is griev-

ous, and the burden of them is intolerable," are not muttered by a hollow lip, but uttered with a feeling heart.

A sinner thus convinced of sin, struggles hard to help himself. He watches, strives, and prays, and fain would keep the whole law. But as he strives, the law opens to his view, and shews its spiritual nature, and its marvellous extent; reaching to every action, word, and thought, and calling for obedience every moment. And now he feels his nature's sad depravity. His heart is earthly and unclean, and therefore has a fixed dislike to spiritual duties. It may be forced on them, but cannot relish them, nor keep a full attention to them. He could sit four hours in an idle play house; and though crowded up exceedingly, could keep a fixed attention all the time, and be sorry when the farce was over. But his heart goes to prayer, like an idle boy to school, sauntering every step, and would play truant if he dare.

After many fruitless struggles to keep the law, he finds himself without strength. Fain he would delight in God, and in his spiritual service, but he cannot. His nature will not kindly move towards God, and, when thrust upon the task, groweth quarrelsome or sleepy, and is quickly jaded down. Hence he finds an utter need of the Spirit's aid, to create his heart anew, and breathe some spiritual life, to enable him for spiritual service.

The curse of the law has now made known his guilt; the spirituality of the law has shewn his depraved nature; and his vain attempts to keep the law have disclosed his utter feebleness. Thus the law has prepared him for Christ. His heart is hum-

bled and broken down with an awful sense of his guilt and feebleness; he is possessed of the first beatitude, poverty of spirit, but does not yet know that it is a leading step to the kingdom of heaven.

The first beatitude conducts him to the second, blessed are the mourners. He mourns because he is poor in spirit, sensible of his spirit's poverty: stript of all his fancied worth, and fancied ability to help himself; weary of sin, and of his evil heart: heavy laden, with a guilty burden, and seeking rest but finding none.

Pray, Doctor, who is this sorry fellow, this weary wretch, that comes to Jesus Christ with such a loaded pack on his back? Some highwayman, no doubt, or some housebreaker, perhaps a murderer; at least a person who has been excommunicated.

Indeed Sir, this sorry fellow is the Doctor himself, and every one who comes aright to Jesus Christ. Did you never read the invitation which he makes to sinners? "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." You are a sinner, Sir; and all men are sinners, and condemned by the law; but all men do not feel their condemnation, and therefore are not heavy laden with a guilty burden, nor laboring after rest. Yet such are invited; and only such are accepted. What right have you to come to Jesus Christ, unless you come in his appointed way?

If your wealthy neighbor should invite his poor parish widows to dine on Sundays at his house, this invitation would give you no right to dine, nor yet the vicar: you are not poor widows. And supposing

you should borrow female cloathing, and call yourself a poor widow, female dress would not procure a right to dine, but might expose you to a cudgel. Yet this is now become the genteel way of coming unto Jesus. Men borrow at church the garb and language of a christian, and say most sad things of themselves, while they are upon their knees, as if they were poor sinners truly, and yet would execrate a preacher, who should say the same things in a pulpit which they utter in a pew.

You have heard, no doubt of beggars who tie a leg up when they go a begging, and then make hideous lamentation of their lameness. Why, this is just your case Sir. When you go to church a praying, which is begging: you tie you righteous heart up, and then make woful outcry for mercy on us miserable sinners. Oh, Sir, these tricks may pass a while unnoticed; but Jesus Christ will apprehend such cheats at last, and give them their desert.

Would you know where God will cast a gracious eye? He tells you, To this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is poor and contrite; poor in spirit, and bruised with a sense of his sinfulness.

And would you hear whom Jesus calls? His own lips inform you, I am not come to call the righteous; no; why should he? If he did, they would not come in his way, for they have found a better. But I am come, he saith, to call sinners; sinners sensible of sin, and bruised with it; and to call them daily to repentance; not to patter over good confessions with a frozen lip, but to breathe them from a mourning heart. St. Luke introduces the call with these words, The whole need no physician, but the sick. And pray

Sir, who are the whole? Have any kept the whole law with out offending in a single point? Not a man. Then all are condemned by the law, and have passed under its curse. Yet many think themselves whole or nearly whole, and therefore see no need or little need of Christ's atonement. Alas for such! When the stone they have rejected falls upon them it will grind them to powder. But the sick need a physician: they feel that woful sickness, the plague of the heart, and loathe themselves in dust and ashes.

But we must take a little further notice of our young pilgrim, before we drop him altogether. He was left disconsolate with raw back and weeping eyes, just flogged out of Moses' school, and seeking balm to heal his wounds, but finding none. At length the invitation of Jesus reaches his ears, Come unto me, thou heavy laden soul, and I will give the rest. He hears and wonders, listens and is pleased. A gleam of joy steals into his heart; a joy he never felt before, springing from a cheering hope and dawning prospect of deliverance. This kindles high esteem and kind affection for the Saviour, who appears all lovely in his sight, and often draws an heavenly tear from his eyes. The name of Jesus groweth musical, his love adoreable, and his salvation above all things desirable.

The weeping sinner enters now upon a new world, and joins himself with the praying citizens of Zion. Jesus is welcomed as his King and Saviour, and receives Hosannahs from him. He begins to understand what grace means, even mercy, rich mercy, freely shewn to a lost and ruined sinner. No sermon suits him now, but what directs his heart to Jesus, and sets the Saviour forth as prophet, priest and king, to save

his people. A full and free salvation captivates his heart; 'tis just the thing he wants, and therefore highly welcome. And whilst the tidings of this royal grace are sounding in his ears, he seems to give them credit; but when the book is laid aside, or sermon over, fresh doubts arise which much perplex him. His understanding is enlightened, but his heart retains a legal bias, and a secret harping after merit still. Sometimes he fears the gospel tidings are so good, they are not true; or if they may be true, they are too good for him. He likes and wants the promised grace, but staggers at the promise. A sense of guilt and his uncleanness so dismay him, that he dares not bring a filthy naked soul to Jesus to be washed and clothed by him.

Sincere obedience often peeps again, and bids the pilgrim wash himself first, and Jesus Christ shall rinse him afterwards; bids him plant a fig leaf here and there, and make a patched frock of duty; and if it prove too scanty, Jesus Christ shall eke it out with his fine linen. This expedient pleases for a season, and to work he goes, hoping to make himself so fair and tight, that Jesus Christ shall fall in love with him, and give him rare commendation instead of free pardon. But though he wash himself in snow water, and make his hands exceeding clean, he is plunged in the ditch again, and his own clothes abhor him. Thus he grows bewildered, and has lost the sight of grace, until he hears it preached afresh; and then he drops the snow-water, and hastens to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. He stands upon the brink, but cannot enter; and longs for a washing, but must wait the moving of the water. He views the foun-

tain, and sees it pure and open; he views the promise, and sees it full and clear; He that believeth shall be saved: which makes him cry, "Oh! that I could believe the promise; Jesus then would save me; but my heart staggers, and when my foot seems fixed upon the rock, a sudden gust of doubts blows me into the mire again."

Now he knows the meaning of St Paul's words, Believe in Christ Jesus and thou shalt be saved, and he clearly understands that his want of pardon, peace and holiness, is owing to his want of faith. If he could believe, Jesus Christ would fufill his promise: it would be done according to his faith. Jesus Christ would save him from the guilt and power of sin.

This makes him feel his want of faith, and want of power to give it. He had been nursed in a Christian land, and thought a mere assent to scripture was sufficient ground to make him a believer; and he marvelled that some preachers made a mighty stir about this easy matter. But he finds this human faith will neither purify his heart, nor wash his conscience: it will not save from sin. And he feels that prayer is nothing, and procureth nothing, without divine faith. He sees a reason why the chosen twelve should say, Lord increase our faith, because it is the gift of God. Could they give themselves one grain, they might add another, yea a dozen grains or twenty; and they need not ask for that which they could give themselves. Besides these men, who ask for faith, were not heathen men, butChristian men, true followers of Christ; and none but such can pray for faith, with a hearty feeling of their want of it.

Doctor, you talk mightily of unbelievers; pray, where do they grow? In Lapland, among the witches; or in Greenland among the whale-fishers. Sure the people of England are staunch believers, and very good christians. A modern set, I own, has started up among us, who think it courage to defy their Maker, and act as freely as if they could controul him: and if they think as freely as they act, they may well be called free thinkers. Such people cannot value Jesus Christ, because he brings hell tidings to their ears. Who can love a messenger of ill news? Mahomet would prove a sweeter prophet to this light heeled gentry. However, these are but a few rotten pears among the heap; the rest are sound; and I can vouch for my own parish, that they are all believers. Indeed, Doctor, it would do you good to see how smirkingly they go to church in summer; and how tidily they look at church, with their better coats and gowns on.

Oh, Sir, the lifeless manner in which people pray, or hear the word of God at church, sheweth plainly, that they have no property in the blessings of the gospel. Glorious things are spoken in the scripture, but they make a mighty small impression on a Christian congregation. The heavenly tidings fall into their heavy ears, like money dropt into a dead man's hand. No comfort is received from the money or the tidings, because they both are dead, and have no interest in them.

If you Sir, was an heir to a fine estate, your bosom would be often warmed with the joyful prospect; but your father's servant could not feel your joy. His bosom would not glow, when the fields are viewed, or when the rents are paid. And wherefore? Because he is not the heir.

A Bible is the precious store-house, and the magna charta of a christian. There he reads of his heavenly Father's love, and of his dying Saviour's legacies. There he sees a map of his travels through the wilderness, and a landscape too of Canaan. And when he climbs on Pisgah's top, and views the promised land, his heart begins to burn, delighted with the blessed prospect, and amazed at the rich and free salvation. But a mere professor, though a decent one, looks on the bible as a dull book; and peruses it with such indifference, as you would read the title deeds belonging to another man's estate.

I am amazed to hear you vouch for your parish, as a whole flock of believers. Such a thing was never known before, and would make an eighth wonder of the world. Why, Sir, are there none among you that are slaves to divers lusts and pleasures? None that live in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another? Have you no drunkards, no sabbath-breakers nor common swearers, no extortioners nor covetous, no liars nor thieves, no lazy hands that will not work, and no light minds that cannot pray? If you think such church-goers are believers, I may fairly rank satan at their head; because he stands possessed of their faith, and is the noble captain of this troop. A troop which often makes up three quarters of a parish.

Jesus says, He that believeth, shall be saved. Saved from what? Why, from the guilt and power of sin. Such is Christ's salvation here on earth. But this black troop is visibly and wilfully under the power of sin; and therefore cannot have that faith which saves from sin.

Thus at one reckoning, the greater part of your sheep prove goats or wolves; but a remnant is behind of decent people, the modern soft phrase for a christian. Let these decent people take a decent trial; it will not hurt them, if they are good men and true.

St, Paul says, Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith. He takes it not for granted that christian professors must be true believers, but commands them all to prove their own selves: and drops a question, as a touchstone, to prove themselves by. A strange question it must seem to such as have not true faith, yet it is a most important question, and the only one that distinguishes true faith from counterfeit. The Apostle does not ask the Corinthians whether they are sober, honest, charitable, church going people, the present pigmy standard for a Christian soldier; but he asks a very searching question, even this, Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you? And declares, if they knew it not, they must be reprobates, disapproved of God as hypocrites notwithstanding all their decent carriage.

The meaning of St. Paul's question is plainly this, "know ye not that the Spirit of Christ is in you?" For where Christ's Spirit is, there is he. The same kind of question is asked in the first epistle, "Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Very right, Doctor, here we are agreed. All christians, to be sure, must have the Spirit of Christ; and though we feel it not, but are utter strangers to its influence, we must be supposed to have it; because we are born in a Christian land, have a Christian name,

breathe a wholesome Christian air, have a pew in some Christian church, keep a merry Christmas every year, and bury upon Christian ground. Here is proof enough, Doctor.

Yes, Sir, proof enough that you live in a Christian land, but no proof that you are Christian people. To suppose you have the Spirit's presence, and yet remain an utter stranger to its influence, is the topmost tower of enthusiasm, the soaring pinnacle on which its floating weathercock is fixed. So! this blessed guest comes to lurk in your bosom, like a spy in a camp: or like a thief in a cellar; and steals in and steals out, without your notice; mighty fine; but you are not such a wild enthusiast in common life, as to suppose there is money in your pocket, when you feel none; nor bank notes in your drawer, when you find none. If you never feel any symptoms of patience, you cannot well suppose yourself possessed of any; and why should you dream of the Spirit's presence, when you never find any tokens of it?

The Spirit's influence must be felt, or it cannot profit; and the very offices of the Holy Spirit do suppose and warrant such a feeling. Let me mention some of them, which are these: to quicken, to strengthen mightily, to witness our adoption, and to bring heavenly joy. Now Sir, what avails that quickening which I cannot see? It leaves me just as heartless to spiritual duty as it found me. And what advantages does that mighty strengthening bring, which is not perceived by me? It yields no further power to subdue my lusts than I had before. And of what service is that witness in the court of conscience, who speaks in such a low or mumbling tone, that none can

hear or understand him? I am just as well without his evidence as with it. And lastly, of what use or value is that heavenly joy, which I cannot taste? All this is just the picture of Isaiah's hungry man, who dreamt he was eating, but awoke and was empty.

But, Sir, St. Paul did not ask this idle question, "Do you *suppose* the Spirit of Christ is in you?" All the church at Corinth, and all the churchmen in Great Britain might have answered quickly, "Yes, Mr. Paul, we do *suppose* it." But he asks a weighty question, "Do ye *know* it?" Have you real experience, in heart-felt knowledge, that the spirit of Christ is in you? Are you acquainted with his operation? Do you know it.

St. Paul may ask this question safely, because his name is canonised, and his bones are mouldered into dust; but if a living preacher ask the same question, the world cry out enthusiasm! And yet Saint Paul makes this very knowledge the evidence of true faith, and accounts other faith which produces not this knowledge, to be counterfeit, and the men themselves to be reprobates.

Jesus saith to his diciples, "Ye know the Spirit, for he dwelleth in you." His words carry this plain meaning, that where the Spirit dwells, he makes his presence known by his operations on the heart.

St. John tells the whole christian church, "Hereby we know that Christ dwelleth in us, by his Spirit which he hath given us." We know the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in us, and thereby are assured of our union with Christ. And, like as Paul had done before, he proposes this knowledge as a touchstone to try your profession; hereby we know that Christ dwelleth in us.

Indeed, Doctor, I am a stranger to the Holy Spirit's influence, yet do not seem disposed to question my profession. Still I think my faith is sound like any roach; and am sure there is no better in the parish. The vicar never questioned it; and why should you? It is not mighty civil. Besides, I am free of my beer, and have the good luck to be loved by every one; scarce a dog will bark at me. "As honest as the old grazier," is a common saying, and this alone is proof enough that I must be a christian.

Indeed, Sir, this alone is proof enough against your christianity. "While you are of the world, the world will love you; but when you cease to be of the world, and are chosen out of the world, the world will hate you." It hated Jesus Christ, and will hate every true disciple.

Paul affirms peremptorily, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." Live where you will, in a christian or a heathen land; live when you will, in the present or a distant age; Paul affirms universally of real christians, "Yea, they all shall suffer persecution." If you lead what the world calls a godly life, you will have the world's commendation. You may be sober, and honest, and friendly; you may pray and give alms, and fast too if you please; and while these things are doing by your own strength, and made a ground of acceptance with God, you are waxing godly in yourself, or from yourself, made godly by the world's spirit, and the world will applaud you. But if once you grow godly in Christ Jesus, renouncing all your wisdom, strength and righteousness; and come to Jesus as a lost sinner, seeking all supplies from him, resting all your hope

upon him, making him your all in every thing, and counting all things utter dross in comparison of him, then the world will hate you, and lift a heel against you. A godly life in Christ Jesus thwarts human pride and stains all its glory, which will not be suffered very patiently.

Men are apt to bless themselves in the world's esteem, and look upon it as a kindly token that the Lord accepts them. To rectify the judgment and sweep away deceitful hopes, arising from the world's good name, Christ has dropt a curse upon it, saying, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." This is one of the Lord's Shibboleths, which he uses to alarm a decent professor, the world's favorite. It is a frightful ugly bridge upon the king's highway. An Israelite goes over safely, but no Edomite can pass it. Esau, the elder brother, will not travel here, but trudges down to a ferry built by Mr. Fairspeech, to make a smoother passage over the river.

So much for the world's esteem: happy is the man, who has lost it wholly and honestly. But your faith, Sir, must be canvassed a little more. You are a grazier it seems, and when you buy a bullock at a fair, you do not take the salesman's word, but feel the beast yourself, and examine all its points minutely. Now, Sir, do the same by your faith; take it not on trust as recommended by your neighbor. but examine it, and handle all its points by the word of God. Faith is an active and a fruitful thing: its fruit is pleasant both to God and man. And the man who possesses it, is a noble man indeed, an heir of God through Christ. But it behoves us to be wary, for counterfeit faith, like counterfeit gold is very current.

Paul says, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." We have peace, or possess it; for what we have, we must possess. Now this peace is given to assure the conscience that God is at peace with us, that he is reconciled, and has forgiven all our trespasses. And whoever feels this peace, must be assured of the pardon of his sins; it is the witness of his pardon.

This blessed peace does not grow in nature's garden, nor can it be dug out of the mines of human merit. It was lost in paridise, and it can be found only at Calvary. It is called the peace of God, because it is of God's bestowing, and bestowed through Jesus Christ alone.

Where this peace is bestowed, it is found to be as Paul describes it, "A peace passing all understanding." A peace so exquisitely rich, that none can understand what it is, until he feels it; and when he feels it, he never can express it. Men may mistake this peace, before they taste it, as ten thousands do; and take up with an human calm instead of it; but he who feels it, never can mistake it; for nothing else is like it; it passeth all understanding.

The Holy Spirit seals this peace upon the conscience, and thereby proclaims the pardon of sin, and "sheds abroad the love of God into the heart," and "beareth witness to our adoption."

This sealing of the Holy Spirit is given as an earnest of our future inheritance. It is a heavenly pledge dropt into our bosom, to assure us of our interest in Christ. Thus the conscience is delivered from the fear of wrath, and fear of death which brings bondage; the heart now rejoices in God, as a reconciled God; calls him Father, by the Spirit of adoption; de-

lights in his blessed service, and feels the meaning of St. Peter's words, "Believing in Christ Jesus, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

These are weighty words, directed unto all believing churches, and experienced by them; but never were, and never will be felt by a mere human faith, springing from the human intellect. The faith, producing heavenly peace, and the peace produced, are both the gift of God.

By the help of this divine faith, the happy christian now repeats his church hymns with truth and pleasure, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Or with old Simeon, "Let thy servant depart in peace, O Lord, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Now, Sir, hear what your own peace is. You feel no distress of mind, but are mighty easy; and your calm, which is a dead calm, arises from your character, though a sinful character at best. Your peace brings no heavenly joy, and so comes not from heaven; neither does it flow entirely through the golden conduit of the Saviour's merit, but drips from a rotten wooden pipe off your own duties. You are, it seems, a cheerful harmless creature, like a robin redbreast, who is much respected every where: and you frequent the church, as many a pious mouse will, yet does not like her quarters; prayer books are dry champing; a pantry suits her better. And you see many, who are worse than yourself abundantly, which makes you hope your state is good; and while outward things go smooth, your calm continues. But when calamities come on, and thicken as they come, your peace is gone; it cannot stand a tempest. And

when your soul is hovering on a sick bed for its flight, it will either feel a dead security or take a frightful leap into another world. Unless you are supported by divine faith, you cannot sing the christian's dying song, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

We now proceed to another point of faith, and a choice one too, very savoury and nourishing to a true believer; St. Peter tells us, that faith purifies the heart: and St. John affirms, this is the victory, whereby we overcome the world, even our faith: and he tells us what he means by the world, even the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

Come, Sir, bring your face to the gospel-glass; and handle this point well, like an old grazier. Does your faith overcome the lust of the flesh, making you victorious over your palate, and over outward pollution, and inward uncleanness?

Does your faith overcome the lust of the eye, and keep your heart from grasping after more wealth, more preferment, or more honours? Having food and raiment, have you learnt therewith to be content?

Does your faith overcome the pride of life, and prevent your being charmed with a lofty house, rich furniture, genteel equipage, and splendid raiment? Does it make you sick of earthly vanities, and draw your heart to things above?

Speak, Sir, and speak honestly. If you are a slave to these matters, and a quiet slave, you may keep your faith: satan will not steal it from you. His own sooty cap is full as good as your rusty bonnet. The devils believe, and tremble, but are devils still.

One point more, Sir, and we have done. Faith is

not only intended to pacify the conscience, and purify the heart, but also to rescue the mind from earthly troubles. Our passage through life is attended with storms: we sail upon a boisterous sea, where many tempests are felt; and many are feared, which look black and bode mischief, but pass over. Now faith is designed for an anchor, to keep the mind steady, and give it rest; even as Isaiah saith, "thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

Precious promises, suited to our wants, are scattered through the Bible: and divine faith will feed upon the promises, looking unto Jesus to fulfil them; but human faith can reap no profit from them. Let me suppose you in distressful circumstances, and while musing on them with an anxious heart, you cast a look upon a distant Bible. The book is fetched and opened, and this passage meets your eye, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Here you view a gracious promise, made by a faithful God, and made without limitation or condition, directed unto every one that reads or hears it, applicable to every time or trouble, and requiring only the prayer of faith for deliverance. Yet, Sir, it is possible, this blessed promise might not even draw a prayer from you; perhaps it gains a little musing, and the book is closed. Or if it should extort a feeble cry, the prayer does not ease your heart, nor fetch deliverance, for want of faith.

You know the word of Jesus, All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. But for want of faith, your reasoning heart will ask, "From whence can this deliverance come?" What is

that to you Sir? God keeps the means of deliverance out of sight, on purpose to exercise our faith; but promises to make a way for our escape, though we can see none.

Or perhaps you may surmise, "This promise was not made for me: I am not worthy of it." Sir, God's promise is not made to compliment your worthiness, but to manifest the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus. Do you mind how the promise runs? It is not said, "Glorify me first, and afterward I will deliver thee;" which would be making man's worthiness a foundation for God's blessings. But he says, "I will deliver thee, and then thou shalt glorify me."

Faith considers all the promises as freely made to supply our wants, and rests upon the Lord's faithfulness to fulfil them; and when a promise is fulfilled, adores the mercy, and glorifies the Lord for it. In this way, and this only, he gets some hearty rent of praise. Such free deliverance wins the heart, and binds it to the Lord, and makes obedience cheerful.

I know a man, who having no family, spends his income yearly, as little as he can upon himself, and the rest upon his neighbors. He keeps no purse against a rainy day, and wants none; Jesus Christ is his banker, and a very able one. Sometimes by sickness or unforeseen expenses, he gets behind hand, and greatly so. At such times, he does not run about among his earthly friends to seek relief, but falls upon his knees, and calls upon his banker, saying, "Lord I am in want, and thou must help me. Here I bring thy gracious promise; look upon it, Jesus. It says, "call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Lord, I call.

and thou dost hear; I believe, and thou art faithful: be it now unto me, according to thy word." Such prayers, he said, never failed to bring supplies; some, from those who cared for him; and some from such as avoided his company. For Jesus Christ has every heart and purse in his own hand; and often makes a raven feed his prophets, or makes the earth help the woman, to shew his finger clearly in such deliverance.

Scripture promises are real bank-notes of heaven, and the riches of believers, who do not live on stock in hand, but traffic with this paper currency. Where divine faith is found, it takes the notes to Christ's bank, and receives the cash. But human faith cannot traffic with this paper; it reads the notes, and owns them good, but dares not take them to the skies for payment. No faith can act on God, but that which comes from God.

Prayer of faith exercised with perseverance, surely brings deliverance: if not immediately, yet at a proper season; and till deliverance comes, the mind is stayed on God and kept in perfect peace. Faith picks the thorns out of the flesh, and takes the rankling pain a way, before the wound is healed.

Truly, Doctor, now you make me thoughtful. I begin to see my rusty bonnet, and confess it would fit a fiend's head, as well as mine. My faith will not produce the precious fruit you have mentioned. It brings no peace, passing all understanding; affords no real victory over the world; and yields no sweet relief in time of trouble. It picks no thorns out of my flesh; it must be counterfeit. My support in trouble arises from my purse, or from my friends, and not

from faith. Yet I cannot comprehend how a mere reliance on God's promise can charm away our grief, and set the heart at rest before deliverance comes. This seems a charm indeed!

So it is, Sir, and a most delightful charm; yet not fanciful, but real, having good foundation in our nature. Where divine faith is given, it will act on God, as human faith will act on man, and produce the same effect. A case will make my meaning plain.

I suppose you, as before, fallen into great distress, and a lawyer's letter is received, bringing doleful tidings, that your person will be seized, unless your debts are paid within a month. While the letter is perusing, an old acquaintance calls upon you, sees a gloom upon your face, and asks the cause of it. You put the letter into his hand: he reads and drops a friendly tear. After some little pause, he says, "Old friend, I have not cash at present by me, but engage to pay your debts before the month is out." Now, Sir, if you thought this person was not able to discharge your debt, or not to be relied on, his promise would bring no relief, because it gains no credit. You have no faith in him. But if you knew the man was able, and trusty, his promise would relieve you instantly. A firm reliance on his word would take away your burden, and set your mind at ease, before the debt was paid.

Well, Sir, if a firm reliance on the word of man, has this sweet influence on the heart, a firm reliance on the word of God will have the same. Why should it not? God's word deserves as much credit surely as the word of man. He is as able to perform, and as faithful to fulfil his promise, as your neighbour.

"No one ever trusted in him, and was confounded. And where the mind is stayed on God, it will be kept in perfect peace, before deliverance comes. Such, may say, with David, God is our refuge, therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea. Or with Habakkuk, Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be in the vine; though the olive too should fail, and the fields yield no meat; though the flock be cut off from the fold, and no herd be found in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." The prop of God's faithful word cannot break; and a human heart resting firmly on it, never can sink. And men might learn to feel their unbelief, for want of this support in trouble. The prop stands ready on the king's high road, to support all weary passengers; but they have not faith to lean upon it, else they would find rest.

In speculation, it seems as easy to trust a faithful God, as trust an upright man: but in practice it is found otherwise. When trials come, men cannot trust a faithful God, without divine assistance; so trust him, as to cast their burden on him, and obtain his perfect peace. Here the charm of faith ceases because there is no faith to charm.

If, in time of trouble some prospect of deliverance is afforded by a human arm, men often put a cheat upon themselves, and talk of trusting God, while they are only leaning on a human shoulder. Remove this earthly prop, and take away all human prospect of relief; and the man cries out, "What must I do? I am undone." He cannot rest upon God's naked word, nor seat his heart upon the solid chair of promise without some human stool besides.

Faith is just the same thing now as it was in Abraham's day, who against hope, believed in hope. He had no human prospect of an heir, and yet expected one, relying wholly on God's naked promise. And a naked promise is the whole support of divine faith now. Jesus Christ will admit no partner for our faith. He is worthy of full credit, and expects it; and we must either look to him alone, or look to be confounded. He will be all or nothing.

Nay, Doctor, now you press too hard upon Jesus Christ. He is a very good Saviour to be sure; but we must not put too much upon him. What! lay all the burden of salvation on him? This does not seem reasonable, nor using him handsomely. So, he must do all the work, and I must stand by, as a lazy thief, to see it done. No, no. Doctor, I shall not make a packhorse of my Saviour; but would use him with good manners; and, whilst I look for great things from him, I will try to do something for myself.

Sir, the best manners you can shew towards superiors, is to do as you are bid; and not gainsay their orders, by a wilful pertness, or an ill-timed modesty. You honor Jesus by employing him as a whole Saviour; and you rob him of his glory, and excite his indignation, when you steal a portion of his Royal sceptre, or his priestly censer, or his prophet's staff from him. He is appointed for a Saviour, not a scanty, but a full one; and he never does his work by halves. The work creates no hurry, and is found no burden. He speaks, or wills, and it is done. Do not therefore compliment him with your idle manners, but obey his orders, which are these; "Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am

God, and none else, or nothing less, and therefore able to save. Jesus does not beg of you to look a little to yourself, and the rest to him; but commands you to look singly unto him, for heavenly wisdom to direct you, for heavenly peace to bless you, and for heavenly grace to sanctify you. And he has left a faithful word for your encouragement, that whosoever believeth (or trusteth) in him, shall be saved; saved from spiritual darkness, and from the guilt and power of sin.

You talk of looking to yourself, which bespeaks some confidence in yourself; but Jesus has pronounced a curse on every human confidence. Hear his awful declaration, "thus saith the Lord, cursed is the man who trusteth in man; (in any thing human in himself or in another;) he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh." But take the blessing too and may it reach your heart. "Blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is; he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreadeth out its roots by the river, and does not regard when drought cometh, but its leaf is green, and it never ceaseth yielding fruit."

If your eye is single directed wholly unto Christ, you will be full of light and peace; but if your eye is double, peeping upon Jesus and squinting towards man, you will be full of darkness, and be at length confounded.

The life of faith is called the fight of faith; and truly called so. For where divine faith is given, it is seldom exercised without a conflict in the heart, which loves an earthly refuge, and dreads a naked promise; dearly loves a human prop, and always

seeks some wooden buttress to support God's iron pillar.

On this account men dare not singly trust in Christ's atonement for their peace, but clap their feeble shoulder to his cross to strengthen it; nor dare they rest on Jesus' grace to make them holy, but call up human arms to slay gigantic lusts within; nor can they trust in Jesus' guidance to make them wise unto salvation, but call the wisdom of the world in, an utter night-piece, to chase away the world's darkness.

Many are yet so obliging as to let the Saviour have a share in the work of man's salvation, but Jesus does not thank them for this condescension. He rejects that faith which does not center in him alone and rest the heart entirely on him. He wants no partner, and will admit of none; nor would he be worthy of the name of Saviour, if salvation was not wholly from him.

Hear what he says of himself, "I have trodden the wine-press alone; I looked, and there was none to help, therefore mine own arm brought salvation."

Hear what a prophet says of him: "Behold! the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule; he shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and he shall carry them in his bosom." Here you may observe, all partners are excluded from this work. The Lord Jesus, who is called the Lord God, shall act the part of a shepherd, and lay down his life for the sheep; and by treading the wine-press alone, shall make the atonement himself; then he will gather the flock, and feed the flock, and carry the flock home himself. Jesus Christ does not help you to help yourself; but he does the whole work himself; his own arm shall rule.

Indeed, where men are quickened by the Holy Spirit, and well convinced of their sinfulness and helplessness, they are now enabled to use the means of grace properly, and must use them diligently, but the whole work still is in the Saviour's hand. He must guide the understanding by his Spirit into all-saving truth; he must bring his blood bought peace to the conscience; he must tame the tempers, sanctify the affections, and make us cheerfully disposed for all good works. Our business is to watch and pray, and it is the Saviour's office to work in us to will and do. What will and power he gives, we may exercise, and nothing more; he only can increase it who first gave it.

Paul says, "It has pleased the Father that in Christ Jesus" (in his human nature, as a temple) "all fulness should dwell." All fulness of wisdom to direct us, of power to protect us, of grace to pardon and sanctify us. And this all-fulness is treasured up in Christ, the head, to be communicated to the members of his body. Whatever wisdom, strength, peace or righteousness are not received from this store-house by faith, are spurious, a mere tinsel ware, which may glitter much, but has no value.

Paul says further, "Christ is all and in all." He is possessed of all-fulness that he might be, not only something in our wisdom, strength, peace and righteousness, but all in every thing, and all in every person; all in the Greek as well as the Barbarian, all in the scholar as well as in the rustic.

And St. John says, "we beheld Christ's glory, full of grace and truth; and out of his fulness have we all received, even grace for grace." Where the apostle shews, that a believer's business is to receive supplies of grace out of Christ's fulness.

Doctor, I cannot comprehend that Jesus Christ must be all in wisdom to a scholar, as well as to a countryman. If human learning will not help make us wise unto salvation, of what use is it, and wherefore do we value it? My landlord is reckoned a monstrous scholar; he has been at Cambridge, and travelled abroad, and talks French at a wonderful rate. He is always at his books, and makes eclipses when he pleases; we hear he put four into Dyer's almanac the last year. One day he took me into his study and shewed me all his learning; bless me, what a sight! more books by half upon his shelves than I have bullocks in my pastures! and they seemed well handled; for I did not spy a mouldy book in his study, except an old bible, which lay drooping in a corner: I suppose it was his grandfather's. Now Doctor, does it not seem likely, that my landlord must get more christian knowledge from his vast gilded heap of books, than I can get from a plain single bible?

Human science, Sir, keeps men out of mischief, trains them up for civil occupations, and oft produces notable discoveries, which are useful to the world; but never can lead the heart to Jesus Christ, nor breed a single grain of faith in him. They who know most of human science, and have waded deepest in it, know the most of its vanity, and find it vexation of spirit.

The heavenly oracles declare, "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God," and tells us, "not many wise are called" to possess the gospel kingdom. And surely God would never brand the wisdom of the world as folly, if it had the least tendency to make men wise unto salvation.

It will, I think, be found a certain truth, that when human science is cultivated eagerly in a christian country, the study of the bible always grows neglected; and that immorality and infidelity spread their branches equally with human science; and that a learned nation, when arrived to its highest pitch of human science, is just become ripe for slavery, and doomed to perpetual bondage: witness Egypt, Greece and Rome.

Bible knowledge, fetched in by prayer and watered well with meditation, makes the mind humble and serious; but human science lifts men up, makes them vain in their imagination, darkens the foolish heart still more, and thereby drives them farther from God. The present age is no bad comment on the following scripture, "the world by wisdom knew not God."

Solomon gave his heart to seek wisdom, and knew more of the secrets of nature than any man; yet he found no real profit from this study, but calls it vanity and a sore travail which the sons of men are exercised with. This is left on holy record, to direct us what to think of human science; and they who laugh at the direction, may chance to weep at last, as Grotius did, and repeat his dying lamentation.

Pray, Doctor, what was it?

Why, Sir, as he lay lamenting on his death bed, calling himself the poor publican, mentioned in the parable, and wishing he might change conditions with John Urick, a poor but devout man, some that were present, spake to Grotius of his great industry and learned performances, and spake of them with admiration; to which he replied with a sigh, "alas! I have squandered my life away laboriously in doing nothing.

The learned Seldon, his antagonist, was very much of his mind, when he came to die.

Sir, if you would learn wisdom in the school of Christ, Paul affirms, you must become a fool, in order to be wise. A crabbed lesson truly, to be learned by a scholar! and a mighty strange expression, yet exceeding proper for a scribe, to wake him from his fond delirium, and fetch him to his senses. He needs such amazing language to make him pause and gaze about for a meaning. It is a block thrown in his way, to stop his vain pursuit, or brush his shins, if he advances. It tells a scholar, he must go empty unto Jesus, and see himself a fool in heavenly science; as much in daily want of a teacher here, as an ideot is of some director in his worldly matters.

The master of the school speaks the same kind of language to his scholars: "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The Saviour's little child, and the apostle's fool, instruct us how to seek heavenly wisdom; not by drawing it from human brains, or heathen folios, but by meekly going unto Jesus, as a little child to be taught, or as a fool to be made wise.

What then, you ask, must we cast away the languages, and throw aside the Bible? By no means. Read the word of God with care, and in its native language if you can; but read it too with prayer, and not with prayer only, but with hearty dependance upon Jesus while you read. Put your eyes into the Saviour's head while you look upon his book, and when his head directs your eyes, you will have light enough.

Scribes in every age have been much akin to the Jewish scribes, cavillers at Jesus, and rejectors of his

doctrine. They are too wise to be taught, and too lofty to sit down at the feet of Jesus. "God will teach the meek his ways, and the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err. But the Lord turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness; yea, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness."

Sir, this subject has been often on my thoughts, and much might be said upon it; but this little shall suffice, which perhaps may set all Ephesus in an uproar about their goddess; and make them cry out vehemently, as before, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

Indeed, Doctor, I am willing to become a convert here, for the grazier is no scholar, yet endued with common sense. And if scholarship is needful for a christian, it seems hard that the poor, who are much the largest part, should be barred from it unavoidably. And it seems also strange, that the poor should be found and declared the chief subjects of the gospel kingdom. But, Doctor, if Jesus Christ has all the stores I need, and is in heaven, how must I get at him? Astronomers, they say, by a wooden pipe, will spring up to the skies in a twink; and tell as many pretty stories of the stars, as if they had them in their pocket. I am a gross unweildy man, you see, and being born without wings, dare not venture on a flight towards the skies; can you help me to a ladder, which may conduct me thither?

Yes Sir, you may meet with such an one in Genesis, whose foot was resting on the earth, while its top was in the skies. Jacob saw the ladder in a dream, but Jesus gave the vision, to represent himself. The ladder's foot resting on the earth, bespeaks his human nature; as the ladder's top, fairly fixed in the skies, de-

notes his divine nature; and he stood upon the ladder to point out the emblem. At the incarnation of Jesus, this ladder was truly set up, and much intercourse was then carried on between the family above and the family below; therefore angels are described as descending and ascending on the ladder. And, Sir, if Jesus Christ may represent himself by a door, why not also by a ladder?

Jesus explains the riddle, when he tells Nicodemus, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven," is now in heaven by his divine nature, while his human nature, like the ladder's foot, rests on earth. Again, he tells his disciples, "Where I am, there shall ye be also." He does not say, where I shall be there shall ye be also; but where I now am, even in heaven by my divine nature, there also shall my servant be.

Doctor, this vision of Jacob may be a very suitable emblem, but I fear it will not help me to the skies. A visionary ladder may serve a light heeled angel, but will not suit my heavy limbs. I shall certainly miss the rounds, or they will break and let me drop; and a fall only from the moon, would make lamentable work with my body. Therefore unless you can provide me with another ladder, I must e'en grovel still on earth. But does it not seem strange that angels should wait on men? I do not wait on my servant Tom, though he is my fellow creature. Indeed, this service of the angels oft amazes me.

Sir, God's two families of angels and men, seem by the covenant of grace to be brought into one; and to bear a joint relation to a common head, Christ Jesus.

Man, one branch, was cast out of order by the fall of Adam; and angels, the other branch, were in danger of falling, as appears by the ruin of their fellows. Both the families are now brought under one head, and the two branches grafted into a common stock, Christ Jesus. Henceforth, they receive all supplies immediately from this new head. In him they all unite, on him they all depend for peace and safety. By him angels are preserved from committing sin, and men redeemed from sin committed. Through him, angels receive a confirmation in glory, and men obtain admission into glory.

This seems to be St. Paul's meaning, when he says, "That in the dispensation (of grace, manifested) at the full (or proper) time, God hath gathered up again into one head, even Christ, all things which are in heaven, and which are on earth." Hence, the whole family in heaven and earth, (being thus united in Christ) are named from him. And as angels are the chief or higher branch of the family, they become waiting servants on the lower branch. according to Christ's command, "Whoever will be chief among you, let him become your servant."

It is not wonderful that angels wait on men, when the Lord of angels came from heaven to wait himself upon them, and to die for them. And this should teach superiors to pay the utmost condescension and the kindest offices to all beneath them. Angels perform this waiting service with cheerfulness, because there is no pride in heaven: that foul weed does not grow there.

But, Sir, if Jacob's ladder does not suit your purpose, another may be had. My master was a carpen-

ter; he built the skies: and coming down to earth, he took a trade adapted to his work above. He can provide you with another ladder, decked with golden rounds of faith, by which you may ascend up to his seat and fetch down needful stores.

That is good news, Doctor; for I am growing weary of my own ladder. It has been fifty years in my possession, and never raised my heart a single step above the earth. I am just as anxious now about the world, as I was; and find no more desire to pray, than I used to do: and as for peace, passing all understanding, I know not how it tastes. Pray inform me of what materials your ladder is composed: and how it differs from the common human one, which every country carpenter can make.

True Christian faith, Sir, is of divine original. It does not grow upon the fallows of nature, nor in the garden of science. Neither spruceness of wit nor solidity of judgment can produce it. An astronomic eye, though vaulting to the stars cannot reach it; and a metaphysic head, though wrapped deep in clouds, cannot ken it. It is no endowment or acquirement of nature, but the gift of God; and wrought by the operation of his Spirit.

Human faith is only human assent to the word of God, which may be quickly given; so the shield is forged at a single welding, and believers sprout up hastily like mushrooms. Thus a proselyte, who takes a new creed, becomes a convert instantly; he needs but turn about, just as the wind of fancy blows, and this is called conversion. But he may turn a protestant, a churchman, a methodist, a baptist, a deist and be zealous too at every turn, while the wind blows, yet never turn to God.

This human faith, sprouting from a helpless mind, can produce no heavenly fruit; but leaves a man just as it found him. Hence it is vilified, as well it may be; for none but mad men dream of being saved by it. It takes a quiet lodging in the understanding, and sleeps there; and being only lodged there, a devil may and does possess it.

Doctor, you deal mainly with the devil; but I cannot blame you. Pulpit lips, like pulpit cushions, are chiefly lined with velvet. Amazing reverence is shewn to satan in a pulpit; it seems the privy closet of his highness. We never hear his name or habitation mentioned in a modern sermon; which makes some people fancy, that the devil sure is dead, and that hell-fire is quite burnt out. Nay, I am told that Jesus Christ did put the devil's name into his short prayer, and called him the evil one, but some roguish body wip'd his name out from our English translation. However, let the the matter pass, and tell me something more about believing. If faith is not a mere human assent to the word of God, what is it, Doctor?

Divine faith, Sir, takes in this assent to the word of God, but takes in abundantly more. It is described in scripture, by coming to Jesus for help, looking to him for relief, flying to him for refuge, resting on him for support, and feeding on him as our heavenly bread. These expressions not only suppose a credit given to his word by the understanding, but a full reliance of the heart upon him to fulfil his word. The exercise of faith lies chiefly in the heart, as St. Paul testifies; "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Thus faith is not a mere credit given to the word of Jesus, but a hearty trust reposed in him; and therefore called believing on him.

The miracles recorded in the gospel, shew the nature and the use of faith; they tell a sinner, what his business is with the Saviour, and how he must go to him.

Some came to Jesus for the pardon of sin, and received a pardon: others brought diseases, and were healed. Each bodily complaint, brought to Christ, was an emblem of some spiritual disease in our nature, which needs healing, and can be healed only by the spiritual physician.

The manner also of applying for a cure, is not recorded as a matter of mere history, but an example for imitation. Every one, who went and got a cure, calls on you, Sir, to go and do likewise. This matter is important; all are much concerned in it, and a few remarks upon it may be needful.

When patients come to Christ, they plead no worthiness to recommend them. They do not come to buy but beg a cure. They bring no money in their caps, nor merit in their mouths to purchase blessings; but come as miserable creatures, and in a worshipping posture, to obtain an act of mercy.

So must you come to Jesus, feeling yourself a miserable sinner, worshipping the Saviour, and seeking mercy to relieve your misery. Jesus Christ, though in Heaven is near you, round about you, always within call: and when your wants are felt, you may come and be healed. Real beggars are relieved now, as aforetime; for Jesus is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever: but he turns sham beggars from his door with indignation, just as we do; beggars who can make a brawling of their misery, and feel none.

Again, patients come to Jesus, not as miserable creatures only, but as helpless ones, quite unable to relieve themselves. Some have tried human means; and some have wasted all their substance on those means; but finding no relief, they come at last to Jesus, and seek a cure from his hand alone. Blind Bartimeus does not dream of putting one eye in, while Jesus puts in the other: nor does the leper hope to help the Lord to scour away his leprosy. The patients, who applied to Jesus, expected all their help from him.

So must you apply if you expect relief: not vainly dreaming of a power to help yourself, and idly complimenting Jesus with a prayer for help: not hoping to couch one eye by your own wisdom, while Jesus tries to couch the other; not boasting that you can heal some leprous spots yourself, while Jesus scours away the rest. Such haughty beggars meet with no relief from Christ; he will be all or nothing.

Again the patients came to Jesus, not only as miserable creatures and helpless, but as believers, who thought him able to help, and expected help from his mercy. This matter of believing was of the utmost consequence; and therefore Jesus usually asks a patient before a cure, Believest thou that I am able to do this? Or tells him after a cure, thy faith has saved thee. And this was said to inform the attending crowd, that faith procured the blessing. For though a patient's misery and helplessness brought him unto Christ, it was faith alone that obtained the blessing. The patient got what he wanted, by a firm reliance on the power and mercy of this divine physician; thy faith hath saved thee.

Even so it is now, Sir; if you desire help from Jesus, you must not seek it with a vain opinion of your own worth to recommend yourself, nor of your own power to help yourself, but must place your whole dependance on his mercy and his power to save you. Your whole expectation of pardon must be from his blood; and your whole expectation of holiness from his Spirit. He alone must wash you, and he alone must work in you to will and do. And if your eye is single, singly fixed upon Jesus, he will shew himself a Saviour, and fill you notably with heavenly light and peace.

When you pray to Jesus Christ to save you from the guilt and power of sin, remember, Sir, he asks you by his word, the same question now, which he asked aforetime, Believest thou that I am able to do this? Not you and I together; no: but believest thou that I, I without you, I alone am able to do this? And till you can answer this question truly, and say, "Lord, I do believe it:" your petition will draw down no blessing.

Many prayers are made which meet with no success. The petitioners continue slaves to evil tempers and affections, because they do not offer up their petitions in faith. Such heathen prayers never reach the skies, but are dropped in a church on Sunday, besoamed out on Monday by the sexton, and applied with other rubbish to refresh some bald grave.

Lastly, when patients came to Jesus, miserable, helpless, and believing, they never would and never did depart without a cure. Sometimes they were neglected at the first application; and sometimes much discouraged by a seemingly rough answer, but at length

their request was granted. And when any met with much discouragement before they gained a blessing, they were dismissed, not with huge encomiums on their honesty, sobriety and charity, (very needful things in their proper place, and might belong to the patients) but they were sent away with rare commendations of their faith: "O woman, great is thy faith! be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

And so it is now, Sir. All that seek Jesus Christ, with a due sense of their misery and helplessness, and with a single trust on his power and mercy, will obtain what they seek. They may wait a while at mercy's gate, and meet with some discouragement; but at length it will be opened. The mourners will be comforted with pardons, and weary sinners will find rest unto their souls. Thus the promises, which are only gazed on by others as a fine picture, prove a heavenly feast to them. By faith they are possessed and enjoyed, as they were intended; which brings abundant praise to God.

Once, Sir, I went to Jesus like a coxcomb, and gave myself fine airs; fancying if he was something, so was I; if he had merit, so had I. And, Sir, I used him, as an healthy man will use a walking staff, lean an ounce upon it, or vapour with it in the air. But now he is my whole crutch; no foot can stir a step without him. He is my all, as he ought to be, if he will become my Saviour; and bids me cast, not some, but all my care upon him.

My heart can have no rest, unless it leans upon him wholly, and then it feels his peace. But I am apt to leave my resting place, and when I ramble from it, my heart will quickly brew up mischief. Some evil

temper now begins to boil, or some care would fain perplex me, or some idol wants to please me, or some deadness or some lightness creeps upon my spirit, and communion with my Saviour is withdrawn. When these thorns stick in my flesh, I do not try, as heretofore, to pick them out with my own needle, but carry all complaints to Jesus, casting every care upon him. His office is to save, and mine to look for help.

If evil tempers arise, I go to him, as some demoniac: if deadness creeps upon me, I go a paralytic; if dissipation comes, I go a lunatic; if darkness clouds my peace, I go a Bartimeus; and when I pray, I always go a leper, crying as Isaiah did, *unclean! unclean!*

If but a little faith is mixed with my prayer which is too often the case, I get but little help; and find the Lord's word true, "according to your faith it shall be done unto you." And St. James rebukes me sternly, "ask in faith, nothing wavering, else you shall receive nothing from the Lord."

Thus the miracles instruct me how to go to Jesus; and every miracle explains the meaning of that general invitation, which Jesus gives to sinners, "come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And, Sir, unless you come in this apppointed way, you will find no more relief from the king of Israel, than from the king of Poland.

Indeed, Doctor, we have nothing to trouble us in our parish, besides family cares and bodily infirmities. The vicar's chief complaint is about his large family and scanty income; and the old clerk's weekly moan is about his rusty voice, which cannot read a psalm without a woful outcry. On Sundays we march

to church in our best clothes, and are decently seated in pews which are swept every Christmas. Aged people look grave enough, but young ones stare about them, and are peeping at every one who steps into the church; for we keep dropping in all prayer-time. And during the sermon, which is soon despatched, some listen, others giggle; and when the weather waxes warm, a few are half awake, and the rest are fast asleep; which proves they have no burden. This is our parish way of going unto Jesus Christ; and as for your's Doctor, it seems more suitable for thieves than for honest folks.

Sir, if it suits a thief it will suit you all exactly. Your are robbing God of his service daily, which is the worst of robbery, and yet but little heeded. You defraud your Maker and your hourly benefactor of his worship and obedience, and cannot feel your infamous ingratitude. If a villain takes away your property or good name, you raise an outcry presently; but though you daily rob God of his service and his honor, you can wipe your mouth and think no harm is done. Your heart too is full of uncleanness; and your eye is as full of evil as your heart. Oh, Sir, you feel no pain from sin, because your eye is not couched to see your malady, nor your conscience yet alive to feel your danger.

In a christian land, men become christians by profession. And while the life is decent, and the church attended, all things pass off mighty well. But it happens, these genteel professors are the very troops of Ezekiel's army, before it was quickened; covered well with plump flesh and fair skin, yet no breath was in them; ranged well in rank and file, and at a dis-

tance seem a famous army, but on a near approach are all dead men. No life is found among them, because the Holy Spirit had not breathed upon them.

So it fared in the prophet's day; and so it fares now. A christian army still appears, with many decent soldiers, of kindly flesh and skin; and when exercised at church, are ranked well in order; bone comes to his bone, and a noise of prayer is heard, but no breath of life is found, no presence of the Lord bestowed, no quickening aids imparted, no cheering consolations granted. It proves a dead scene of worship, conducted like an undertaker's funeral, with cloudy face, and yawning entertainment.

It is not strange, that men reject the gospel, when they find no heavenly comfort from it, and are told they must expect none here. Who will labour in a service, where he meets with constant drudgery, and no refreshment? Who can bear to be much in prayer, unless he finds divine communion in it, which is divine refreshment? And who will daily read the word of God, unless he finds it daily food? Take the food away, the Spirit's application, and we soon grow weary of the Bible, and the spider weaves his web upon it. Nor is this the worst of all; for some, who live upon the altar, now begin like Eli's sons to kick at the sacrifice; and, in a mighty rage of zeal for the Father, would strip his dear Son of divinity, and trample on his blood. When this becomes general, we may expect that Jesus Christ will sweep the church lands, as he swept the abbey lands, out of his vineyard; and make our Sion, once a praise in the earth, to become a hissing and an execration.

Well, but Doctor, I am not yet satisfied, that Jesus Christ must work all our works in us,and be both author and finisher of salvation. What, can I not help make myself a christian ? Is the government so wholly laid upon his shoulders, that he must do all ? You know the old proverb, and proverbs are next to gospel. "Every tub must stand on its own bottom." I would not undervalue Jesus Christ, nor yet disparage myself. At a dead lift I would ask his help ; but his arm and my shoulder should act together, and thus raise the sack upon my back.

Sir, your whole help is laid on him, who is mighty to save, and saves to the uttermost. He instructs you, by the similitude of a vine and its branches, that all the spiritual life and fruit of a believer is derived from him. Jesus Christ is both the root and stem of this vine: the visible stem may denote his human nature ; and the invisible root, producing that stem, his divine nature ; and believers are branches of this vine. Now, Sir, as all the branches of a vine receive their birth, growth, and nourishment, their wood, leaf and fruit, altogether from the vine; so all believers receive their birth, growth and nourishment, their life, faith and fruit, from Jesus altogether. And, Sir, if this similitude be good for any thing, it proves your will and power are good for nothing; good for nothing but to make a christian monkey, who will ape a true believer by his chattering; but his tail and tricks betray the monkey still.

A branch is nothing, and can do nothing, without the vine. If separated from the vine, it dies immediately. Believers too are nothing, and can do nothing, without Christ. He is their all in every thing ; and if

they could be separated from him, they would die a spiritual death directly.

Formerly, when I had asked help in prayer, instead of looking for that help, and relying on it, I strove to help myself, and stripped to fight my adversary. Many of these battles I have fought, but never gained any credit by them. My foe would drop his head sometimes by a blow I gave him, and seemed to be expiring, but revived presently, and grew as pert as ever. I found he valued not an arm of flesh but made a very scornful puff at human will and might. Often when a fire broke out in my bosom, the water I threw on to quench it, only proved oil, and made it burn the faster. The flame of anger would continue in my breast, till its materials were consumed, or till another fire broke out. One wave of trouble passed off, because another rolled on, and took its place. One evil often drove another out, as lions drive out wolves; but in their turns, my bosom was a prey to every wild beast in the forest. Or if a quiet hour passed, it proved but a dead calm; my heart had no delight in God, a stranger yet to heavenly peace and joy.

At length, after years of fruitless struggling, I was shewn the gospel method of obtaining rest, not by working, but believing. A strange and foolish way it seems to nature, and so it seemed to me; but it is a most effectual way, because it is the Lord's appointed way.

Jesus says, He that believeth, shall be saved. Paul declares, We, who have believed, do enter into rest. John affirms, This is the victory, that overcomes the world, even our faith. And Isiah bore his testimony

long before, that God would keep the man in perfect peace, whose mind was stayed on him.

I find my bosom is a troubled sea, and none can give it rest, but that God-man, who said to the wind, and waves, "be still," and they obeyed his voice. And when I stand before him, as his patients did of old, imploring and expecting help, his help is freely given. None ever trusted in him, and was confounded.

Fain we would grow notable by doing; it suits our legal spirit; but we can only grow valiant and successful by believing. When we take the work of salvation on ourselves, it rests on an arm of flesh, and a withered arm, which must fail; but when we wrestle by believing, the arm of Jesus is engaged to fight the battle; and he will and must bring victory, else his word and faithfulness would fail.

Means of grace are put into my hand, but the work is in the Lord's. Watching, praying and believing belong to me, and these I must be taught of God, or I shall never do them right; but all deliverance comes from Jesus Christ. And because he does the work, fights the battle, and brings victory, he is rightly called the Saviour. I must watch against the inroads of an enemy; and when he comes in fight, must wrestle well with prayer, and fight the fight of faith; but if I thrust my arm into the battle, Jesus will withdraw his own: he will be all or nothing. And if I lay my hand upon the ark to help hold it up as Uzza did, I shall be slain as Uzza was.

The crime of Uzza is but little understood; some think it was a slight one, and the punishment severe. But the same sin destroyed Uzza which destroys every sinner, even unbelief. What slew his body, slays

all the souls that perish. He could not trust the Lord wholly with his ark, but must have a meddling finger, called in the Bible margin, his rashness. Rash worm indeed, to help God do his work! But thousands every where are guilty of this rashness and perish by it. Jesus Christ is jealous of his glory as Saviour. He will not share it with another; and whoso takes it from him, takes it at his peril.

The Saviour's word to an Israelite is, "Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of God. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength. Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall support thee. Look to me for salvation, all the ends of the earth. Call on me in time of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

A stranger to the life of faith, makes a snuffle at believing, and thinks no work so easy or so trifling. He wonders why such gentle business should be called the fight of faith; and why the chosen twelve should pray for faith, when every human brain might quickly furnish it.

For my own part, since first sensible of my unbelief, I have been praying fifteen years for faith, and praying with some earnestness, and am not yet possessed of more than half a grain. You smile, Sir, I perceive, at the smallness of the quantity; but you would not, if you knew its efficacy. Jesus, who knew it well, assures you that a single grain as small as a mustard seed, would remove a mountain; remove a mountain load of guilt from the conscience, a mountain lust from the heart, and any mountain load of trouble from the mind.

The gospel law is called the law of faith, and Jesus

sends help according to our faith, and is obliged to send it; not through any merit which is found in faith, but by virtue of his promise, "according to your faith, be it unto you."

This law of faith, or a whole reliance upon Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; is become an exploded doctrine; and human arms are called in to help the Saviour in his work. Salvation is no longer, as St. Paul declares, by grace through faith, but grace and nature jointly. And see, Sir, what has followed. Morality has lost its right foundation, and is sinking daily, because it rests on a human shoulder, which cannot bear the weight.

The gospel too, is become not only much neglected, but rejected and despised also, a certain consequence of the present modish doctrine. A mixed covenant of human might and heavenly help, will rest at last on human shoulders altogether.

For observe, preachers say, we must ourselves do something in salvation work, but cannot say how much. They do not mark the boundary of grace and nature, because they cannot tell what human wit and might may do; of course every man must make the boundary himself.

One thinks he can do much, another can do more, and a deist will do all. Why should he not? You have put him in the path and set his feet a going, and you must not be offended if he takes a step beyond you. Perhaps you can do with only Christ's shoe latchet, and he will cast the latchet too away. If your path be right, he may enlarge his step, just as he pleases; for you cannot mark the ground where he ought to stop.

Thus when the doctrines of human merit, or of human might are preached, they must naturally, and will judicially end in deism, or a total rejection of the grace of Christ; because no limit can be fixed, where that human merit, or this human might shall end. If Jesus Christ is not all in every thing, he will become a cypher.

Paul says, salvation is of faith, that it might be by grace; that is, we must be saved by faith alone in Christ, by a whole dependance upon him for every thing, otherwise salvation cannot be by grace, cannot be a mere matter of grace. If men retain some native will and power to save themselves, and exercise it properly, so far they are saved, not by dependance upon Jesus, but by a proper exercise of their own abilities. Adam was endowed with native will and power to save himself, and had he persevered in a right use of these powers, he would not have been saved by grace at all, but by works altogether. And if fallen man has yet some power to save himself, and makes a proper use thereof, so far he is saved by his own works; but then, says Paul, pray what becomes of grace? If you are truly saved by grace, it must be through faith alone. Your whole dependance must be fixed on Jesus, and your obligations rise entirely from him, else you are not saved by grace. What you can do for yourself, you need not be obliged to another for: no grace is wanted here.

And as salvation, in a covenant of grace, must be through faith alone; so that covenant supposes that we want such grace, for God will offer nothing needless, not even grace.

A fallen man has no more power than a fallen angel

to sanctify his nature, or make atonement for sin. Man fell through pride, as angels did; and to humble man in his recovery, he must go clean out of himself for salvation. His whole dependance must be on the Saviour's blood for pardon, and on the Saviour's grace for holiness. Therefore, Jesus says, "Look to me, and be saved."

But Sir, a little recollection, how it fares with yourself and neighbors, would save a deal of talking on this matter. You are an aged man, and seem an honest man, and must have tried what human strength can do. Are your tongue and temper better bridled than they were some forty years ago? Can you love and feed an enemy much better? Can you deal your bread more freely to the hungry, and more cheerfully submit to sickness, pain, and worldly disappointments? Are you growing more humble, and more vile in your own eyes? Can you pray more frequently and fervently: and walk with God more closely, and find the comfort of his presence? Is the word of God more read, and read with sweeter savour? Can you keep a stricter watch upon your bosom, and find more power over bosom sins? Survey yourself all over; then call upon your neighbors, and ask them all the same questions, and see what answers they will make. I believe you will find no great amendment, and no room to vaunt of human strength, but abundant room for self condemnation.

As for the tub you mentioned, it lost its bottom, Sir, above 5000 years ago; and it would be strange indeed, if it stood upon a bottom when it had none. Adam has unhooped all our vessels, and left us no foundation to rest upon but Jesus Christ. Adam fell, and ruined all his race.

Indeed, Doctor, I have the vanity to think myself as good a man as Adam was before he fell. Why should his fall injure me? Could he not stumble without throwing me down? Perhaps he received a bruise, and his ankle might be sprained; but I do not read that he broke his neck. Do the scriptures intimate that his whole nature was impaired, and that he fell from his first estate altogether?

So I think, Sir, but hear and judge. The Lord tells Adam, "In the day he eateth he shall surely die." Adam did eat of the tree, and of course he died on the day he eat, if the word of God is true and faithful. But what death did Adam die on the day he eat? Not a natural, but a spiritual death. All spiritual life ceased on the day he sinned, and his soul was dead to God. His animal life became a sickly and a mortal one; and his spiritual life expired in him, as in the sinning angels.

To fancy that mere mortality was only meant by the threatening, is a strange perversion of this awful sentence, which does not say, thou shalt be liable to death, but thou shalt surely die.

Adam lived 900 years after his transgression, and might have lived nine millions, consistently enough with mere mortality, but not with the threatening. And if one expositor may add the word liable to the threatening, in order to shove it from the spirit; why may not another add the little word not, to shove it from the body too? So the threatening runs thus, "In the day thou eatest, thou shalt not be liable to death," and all is safe and well. The threatening proves mere papal thunder.

But why must all the threatening light upon the body,

and the curse be spent upon it altogether? The whole nature sinned, and the whole should suffer. The body lost its healthy state, and the spirit sure should lose its healthy state too. Nay, the spirit was the chief in transgression, and should bear the chief share of punishment. If the body grew sickly through sin, the soul should be sick to death. When a gang of thieves is taken, the captain of the gang is sure to suffer, whatever happens to the rest. But here the captain in rebellion is reprieved, and the underling is hanged; the spirit strangely escapes without a hurt, and the curse falls wholly on the poor body.

The change of Adam's state is pointed out by the following circumstances. After the fall, he desired no fellowship with God, but dreaded it. When the Lord called he fled, and wished to avoid all converse with him. The language of his heart was, "Depart from me, I desire no knowledge of thee, or communion with thee."

His understanding was now clouded, and a spiritual darkness crept upon it. He lost the right knowledge of God, and thought his Maker saw with human eyes; for he was no sooner called, than he slipt behind a tree, as a mouse will slip behind a tile to hide himself.

His breast was now become the seat of evil tempers, such as devils feel! Their bosoms, once like his, were a blessed seat of heavenly peace, and love and joy; but when sin entered they became a woful seat of war, where wrath and envy, pride and stubbornness, and every evil temper reigns. Adam shews such a bosom when examined; for though examined with much tenderness, he makes no meek confession, nor deigns to urge a single prayer for mercy. He acts

a stubborn part, flies in the face of God, and lays the blame at his Maker's door, as if the woman had been made on purpose to seduce him: "The woman whom thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree."

Adam's heart through sin became a cage of uncleanness. Before his fall he felt no shame though naked, but when he fell such lusts sprung up as brought him shame enough, and made him seek a covering.

Adam's first born child proves a murderer. A hopeful heir, truly! Where the fruit shews the stock, and declares them both possessed of his nature, who is called "a murderer from the beginning." And if St. John is credited, that "whoso hates his brother, is a murderer," then every child of Adam in his turn has been a murderer too.

Now, Sir, we may debate the point a little. If angels lost their first estate by sin, it is not wonderful that man should lose it. If Adam had not lost it, would the Lord act consistently in his moral government? God must hate sin in Adam as well as in an angel; because it is evermore that abominable thing which he loathes, that accursed thing which his soul hates. And his declarations concerning sin are these, which are very awful, and must be universal, "the wages of sin is death; and the soul that sins, it shall die." The angels sinned, and being spirits, had no earthly case like ours to become mortal; but they underwent a spiritual death, and became dead to God. All communion with God ceased; the heavenly image was withdrawn, and a depraved nature introduced.

Sin is just the same deadly bane to the spirit, that poison is to the body; a single dose does the business.

Angels lost ther first estate by this poison of sin; and if disobedience required a change of state in angels, it must require the same in man. For God acts uniformly in his moral government; he is Jehovah, and changes not.

Reasons may be found why God provides a remedy for fallen men, and not for fallen angels; but no good reason can be given why man should keep his first estate after committing sin. Man had a share of satan's disobedience, and man must have a share of his nature. And enough of this horrid nature is apparent in ourselves and others, to confirm the argument.

Some fancy that mortality makes the change of Adam's state; but this is not the whole, nor the chief change; it does not bring a depraved nature, and make us like the great adversary. Sickness, pain and death are only parts of the curse, which respect the body: the spirit also sinned, and the spirit is afflicted with satan's nature. Hence he is stiled "the prince of this world," because he reigns in the hearts of men. A wicked prince suits a wicked subject; like loves its like: and the whole world are said to lie in the wicked one.

It is not strange that some deny the fall. This is part of that spiritual blindness which has crept upon the understanding; and is just what happens to delirious people in a fever, who fancy they are well, and mock at physic and physician. I make no doubt but the devils through that pride which accompanies sin, think as highly of themselves, as of the angels. And since they never can repent, they will rather charge their misery to the undeserved wrath of God, than to their own iniquity.

Every wicked temper that is found in a fiend, I can find in myself and discern in others. And I could as soon suppose that God created fiends, as believe that he created man in his present state. Before the fall, man was pronounced good, *very good;* but after the fall, he became bad indeed, bad enough to be called of God, the child and the subject of the devil. Surely, Beelzebub must grin to hear his vanquished subjects preach of the dignity of human nature; and if such dignity is found in the subject, how much more in the prince? He may well be honored, like the Turk, his cousin, with the title of sublime highness.

Every dog that barks at me, and every horse that lifts his heel against me, proves I am a fallen creature. The brute creation *durst* not shew enmity before the fall, nor *had* they any; but testified a willing homage unto Adam by coming for a name. Eve no more dreads the serpent than we dread a fly. But when man shook off allegiance to his God, the beasts by divine permission shook off allegiance also to man.

Where sin enters, pride will enter too, and supply the place of real honor, and as iniquity abounds, pride abounds also. Else how could sinners boast of dignity, and take up mighty state on account of verbal titles, or of transient manors, when they themselves must presently be eaten up with worms.

Thus, Sir, by disobedience, Adam became both a condemned sinner, and an unclean creature. He was dead in law by his trespass, and dead to God by his sinful nature; dead both in trespasses and sins. The fountain being thus polluted, all its streams were filthy. "For who can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean? Not one." Hence all are called

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"children of wrath by nature," and declared to be dead in sins.

Some traces of the moral law remain, producing what we call the moral sense, or conscience; and the lamp of reason burns, though with a dimmer light, yet sufficient to direct our worldly matters: but the spiritual life is quenched. We are born of the flesh, born with a "carnal mind, which is at enmity with God;" and nothing suits us well but what is pleasing to the flesh. Spiritual service is a shackle put upon the mind; and when the heart is collared with devotion, it drudges through it very heavily, and is mighty forward in it; stops short, starts back, flies out right and left, looks a hundred ways at once, and keeps lowing for the world all the time; just like the two Philistine cows, which drew the Lord's ark to Bethshemesh; they were yoked fast together, and drew forwards, but kept lowing for their calves all the while; and though engaged in religious draught, both of them fell a sacrifice at Bethshemesh, were slaughtered, quartered, and consumed by fire. An awful type of the end of those, who find God's worship not a pleasant service, but religious draught.

Now, Sir, all mankind abide in this state of death, Heathens, Jews and Christians, till they are born of God's Spirit, and "have his holy Spirit dwelling in them." And during their continuance in this state, they neither are nor can be sensible of it, because it is a state of death, which seals up all perception. A dead soul knows no more of its dead condition, than a dead body does. Men will mistake decent worship and decent conduct for spiritual life; and will suppose that gluttons, drunkards, &c., are the only

people in a carnal state. Whereas St. Jude calls every man, a sensual man, who has not the Spirit.

An experimental knowledge of the Holy Spirit's influence, was the Christian's touchstone in St. Paul's day; but modern gospellers have learned a pleasant trick, to have the Holy Spirit yet know nothing of it; and they ask a true believer scornfully, as once a taunting prophet asked Micaiah "Which way went the Spirit of God from me, to speak to thee?" Did he pop upon you through the key-hole, or through a chink in the wall? Which way, Micaiah, was it? and then smote him on the cheek. See here the character of a false prophet, delineated by the Spirit of truth. He has not the Spirit of God, yet he pretends to it by his saying, which way went the Spirit from me? and he ridicules the Spirit's sensible operation, by asking scornfully, Which way went the Spirit unto thee? Did you *see* him come, or *feel* him come into you, any way? Pray, what way was it? let us hear, Micaiah; and take this smite upon your cheek for your trouble. Such was the language of false prophets in old time; and where satan rules, these taunting prophets never die. But, Sir, if you have never felt the spiritual death, I am speaking of, you are yet a dead soul; and will remain so, till Jesus Christ has quickened you.

For, as men cannot be sensible of this death, while they abide in it; so neither can they help themselves out of it. Death strips away all power, as well as all perception. A dead body may as well restore itself to life, as a dead soul. A fallen angel may as soon rekindle spiritual life, and regain his first estate, as a fallen man. Nothing can produce

the spiritual life, and a spiritual mind resulting from it, but the Spirit of God. His breath alone brings this life, which Jesus intimated when he breathed upon his disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

Yet, while men are without this life, and walk the rounds of moral decency, they bravely talk of will and power to make themselves the sons of God: and think St. John a mere driveling, for affirming they are born, not of the will of man, but of God.

A real Christian, in St. Paul's account, is a new creature; "He is God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. And Jesus tells you, how dead souls are quickened: mark his words; they come with double seal to shew their weight and certainty. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Jesus is not speaking of the body's resurrection, at the judgment-day, but of a resurrection which now is, and is coming every day; a resurrection of dead souls to life, not a merely moral, but a spiritual life; and a resurrection caused, not by us, but by himself, even by his voice. He has many voices to call dead sinners by, the voice of his word, of his servants, and his providences; but all these avail nothing, without the voice of his Spirit. His word is but a dead letter, without the quickening Spirit; his servants are but barking dogs, who growl, yet cannot bite, unless he set them on: and his providences are but claps of thunder, alarming for a time, yet quickly over, except he rides himself upon the storm. When he takes the work into his own hand; and the voice of

his Spirit accompanies the voice of his word, or his servants, or his providences, then a sinner hears, and starts from his grave like Lazarus and lives. And having thus received life, he feels his condemnation and his ruined nature, and cries after Jesus.

When the world was brought into this ruined state by sin, man could do nothing more to help himself, than the fallen angels could: and he must perish everlastingly, unless the Lord prevents it. He does, and provides another covenant, the stores of which are not laid up in Adam as before, nor in his ruined children. God does not choose to trust a bankrupt. If man could not stand upright when set upon his legs, how shall he stand when he has none? "Therefore help is now laid upon one, who is mighty and able to save to the uttermost." And the Saviour speaks thus to the ruined sinner, "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help."

However, though man fell, God was not disappointed by his fall; it was foreseen, for "known to God are all his works from the beginning;" and being foreseen, it was provided against in such a manner as might exalt the riches of his grace in man's recovery. The first covenant was made with Adam, a mere man, who was the surety of it; but the surety failed and ruined all. The second covenant was not made with the ruined sinner, a broken merchant, but with Jesus Christ, the Lord from heaven. Jehovah says, "I give *thee* for a covenant," and of course "Jesus is the surety for this better covenant."

Now the business of a surety is to pay the legal debts of another. Our legal debts are, first, perfect obedience, which alone can bring a title unto heaven;

secondly, the curse of death, for not perfoming that obedience.

Jesus Christ first pays the debt of perfect obedience, and thereby, as surety redeems the heavenly title: then he takes the law curse on himself to free believers from it. And both these blessings are imputed, or charged to the account of every true believer. By the death of his surety, he is freed from condemnation; and by his obedience alone he is made righteous, justified in the eye of the law, and obtains a legal title unto heaven.

And, Sir, there is nothing monstrous in this matter, however some may please to startle at it. Human laws every where, as well as the divine, allow of suretiship, which proves it is an equitable thing. If farmer Thomas does some common work for farmer James, the law imputes the work done by Thomas unto James. When a curate preaches for a weary rector, the law imputes the curate's mouth to the silent rector. If you was overwhelmed with debts, and a friendly surety should discharge them all, the law would impute this payment unto you, and acquit you of debt as effectually as if the money had been taken from your own purse, and paid with your own hand.

Indeed, though suretiship is common among men in debts of money, it is not practised in debts of life. For who will die for another? A rogue will not thrust his neck into the halter for a rogue; and an honest man will not choose it, nor will the state consent to it, for honest men are scarce. But the law itself has no abhorrence of such suretiship, and would gain abundant reverence by it.

When a villain dies by the hand of justice, we at-

tend more to the guilt of the sufferer, and to our own security by his death, than to the honor which the law receives by his execution. But if an upright man and well esteemed, should freely suffer for a villain, this striking spectacle would bring much reverence to the law, and give it great solemnity.

Zaleucus, a prince of the Locrians made a law, that every one convicted of a certain crime, should lose both his eyes; and it happened that his own son was convicted of the crime. The prince was not willing that the law should lose its honor, nor could the father bear to see his son quite blind. He therefore orders one of his own eyes to be bored out, and one of his sons. Thus two eyes were given to the law, which brought it more solemnity, than if the son had lost both his own. In such a case, as he passed along, many might have only cried, "there goes the blind youth, who could not obey the law." But when the aged father stirs abroad, and is seen with an eye dug out; this sight of suffering innocence strikes beholders and makes them reverence the law, and dread its penalty.

Pray, hold your hand a little, Doctor; every honest man will strive to pay his debts; and if he cannot pay the whole, will make a composition, and pay what he can. Such a composition I would make for my sinful debts, and hope to pay ten shillings or more in the pound. I am not so vain, as to reject a surety altogether, relying wholly on my own ability for payment; nor can I think myself quite insolvent. I would therefore have the old grazier and Jesus Christ jointly bound in the same bond. This would look creditable: and I could condescend to let

the Saviour sign his name first, though I paid full fifteen shillings in the pound. What think you of this, Doctor.

Sir, I think such a bond would dishonour Christ, and ruin you effectually. If you fancy God's authority is a trifling busiuess, and does not need a surety to make whole satisfaction for sin, you would do well to consider what has happened to the fallen angels, for want of such a surety. They sinned; and the trespass, which brought on their punishment was a single one, no doubt like Adam's. For in God's government, The wages of every sin is death. Yet this single trespass has cast them out of heaven and doomed them to everlasting misery.

You may thrust your name into the covenant, if you please, as a joint bondsman; but it will be at your utter peril; for the Father and the Son will both reject you with abhorrence. The Father has provided a surety for this better covenant, a sufficient surety, and named him singly, and thereby has excluded every other. And if you foist your own name into the covenant, as a joint bondsman, to discharge your debts; what is this, but reflecting on the wisdom of the Father, as if he knew not how to provide a surety; and on the power of the Son, as if he was not able to execute his office? Sir, this is horrible presumption and will be reckoned with at a proper time. God will avenge himself of such proud adversaries.

Adam though a mere man, was qualified as a surety to pay obedience for all in his loins: yet none but a God-man is qualified to make atonement for disobedience. No created being can make satisfaction unto God for sin: the utmost he can do, is to pay his hour-

ly debts; and if the debts are hourly paid, he still is unprofitable, has no merit, nor deserves even thanks; he has only done his duty.

You have read what Jesus says; and what he says, is true of every creature, angel or man; "When ye have done all things, which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have only done our duty. And does the Lord thank that servant, who has done the things that were commanded? I suppose not." You do not thank your own servant, for doing what he is commanded; and yet are more obliged to him, a million times, than your Maker is to you. Now, Sir, if after having done all our duty, we are yet unprofitable, and unworthy of the smallest thanks; pray what room is left for merit, to make atonement?

This saucy idol cannot shew its face in heaven; no angel dares to think of merit. With two wings he flies, to shew his swift obedience; with two his feet are covered, to hide obedience from his eyes; and with two, his face is veiled, in token of unworthiness. Angels do not vaunt, as sinful mortals do, of their obedience and holiness; but with adoring wonder cry, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts! And pay eternal adoration to this holy *three*, the Holy Father, Holy Son and Holy Ghost,

Merit is the fuz-ball, which sprouts from a dung-hill, with a powdered cap; And only garnishes the crest of sinners, who are daily doing what they ought not, or leaving undone what they ought to do. And if the real wages due to sin, is death; then a sinner's merit is of just as much value as a traitor's loyalty.

If Jesus Christ is a mere creature, though the head

of all creation, and if he had paid most rigorous and sinless obedience, he could only say at last, I have done my duty, and deserve no thanks; I am yet unprofitable, and can plead no merit for myself, much less for others.

But if Jesus Christ is God, he is no more bound to keep the creature's law than an earthly master is to do his servant's work. And if he pleased to take man's nature, to become man's surety; though the human nature being but a creature, and acting as a servant, could merit nothing: the divine nature, joined to it by a personal union, can merit, and make noble satisfaction.

The law had claims of obedience upon the human nature of Christ, because it is a creature; but had none upon the divine; it is the Law-giver, whose word created all things, and whose will gives law to all. Here merit will arise, by doing that service which it was not bound to do.

If your servant does his daily work faithfully, no daily thanks are given nor expected; he only does his duty. But if a neighbor lends a helping hand freely, he merits thanks, because the service was not due from him, but freely offered by him. We may merit from each other, but can merit nothing from the Lord, because our utmost service is ever due to him.

Thus by the obedience and death of this God-man surety, the law was magnified and honored, more honored, than if all the sinful race of men had fallen under its eternal curse for disobedience.

If man had paid a perfect sinless obedience, it would have been his title to heaven; a title founded

not on human merit, but on the Lord's free promise, This do, and thou shalt live. Without such a promise, God might have dropt his creature man into nothing, after a thousand years of complete obedience. Yes, if no promise hindred, God might drop a perfect angel into nothing; and perhaps with more justice, than we may kill a happy fly, because of his whizzing. Such an angel lives on courtesy, and has no reason to complain, if it is withdrawn. While he pays obedience, his life abounds with comforts: all things suited to his state are given; but he may drop into nothing, as he was before, if the Lord pleases. God was under no obligation to give him life; and without a promise, he is under none to prolong his life; and least of all to advance a human creature to a better life.

The popish conclave has acted craftily, and more consistently than protestant divines, by inventing works of supererogation. For though these works are false, absurd, and blasphemous, yet being once allowed, they lay a right foundation for human merit If man can do more than he is in duty bound to do, he may merit by such doing. And nothing now is wanted for the Pope, but a Cyclops's eye of infallibility, which any Vulcan readily will make, to determine what these works of supererogation are, and the church's coffers are loaded presently with treasure. Simeon Stylites, by perching on a pillar for a mouth, shall purchase pardons for a thousand profligates.

But Sir, we will take leave of the Pope's eye, and proceed. Every man has sinned, and has lost his heavenly title. A single trespass forfeits it in man or angel, and forfeits it forever. Jesus Christ steps in, as

the human surety, and pays the legal debt of perfect obedience, and thus redeems the sinner's title. Hence he is called the Lord our righteousness. Jesus says himself, Their righteousness is of me, and the church replies, In the Lord have I righteousness. Paul says, "Christ is made to (or rather, for) us righteousness; and declares, we are made righteousness in him; which he calls the righteousness of God; because it was wrought out by the God-man surety.

When John refused baptism unto Jesus, he received this answer, "suffer it to be so now, for thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness." Jesus, as the holy one of Israel, needed not the laver of babtism; but as Israel's surety, he did need it. It became him, as surety, to fulfil all righteousness, moral and ritual, respecting Jews and christians. On this account, he was both circumcised and baptized, partook of the Jewish passover, and the christian eucharist, and went to the yearly feasts at Jerusalem, as the law required. If a single rite had been neglected, he would not have fulfiled all righteousness, nor could have been a legal surety. A trip in one point would have spoiled all.

But, Sir, man has not only forfeited his heavenly title by sin; he has incurred a law curse too, the curse of eternal death. Sin has both barred heaven's gate against him, and opened hell's gate for him. Now, Jesus Christ, as man's surety, paid this legal debt too. He was made a curse for us, and redeemed us from the curse.

Paul is in rapture about this love of Christ; and so is every one, who feels the blessings purchased by it. Yet how little is this love regarded by modern gospellers! Who bears a dying Saviour on his heart, and

thinks or talks about him? A melancholy proof of man's fallen nature; of his deep ingratitude and folly! Sure, we must outmatch a devil here; his heart would leap for joy, to hear the tidings of surety; yet men will pass the surety by, some with no regard, and some with much contempt.

Thus Jesus sets the fallen sinner on his feet again, pays the law debt of complete obedience, to redeem our title; then takes the law-curse on himself, to free us from it.

Why, Doctor, this is charming news indeed; but if this be all that is needful for salvation, I do not see how any can miscarry. Satan may as well bar up his gates: he will not catch a single straggler. My neighbor Fillpot, who comes reeling home at night from the Chequer, stands as good a chance as the grazier who goes soberly to bed. How is this, Doctor? Methinks, I do not like it, that Ned Fillpot should stagger after me to heaven, and get perhaps as good a crown as myself. This will never do. Something surely must be wrought in us, as well as something done for us.

True, Sir; much must be wrought in us, not indeed to purchase salvation, which is already purchased by the surety; but to dispose and enable us to receive salvation freely, and behave suitably for it. Jesus Christ has not only redeemed us from the curse, and bought our title, but has also purchased grace to sanctify our nature, and thereby give us meetness for glory. This grace is always given to the heirs of glory, to prepare them for it; and the benefits of Christ's obedience in life and death are made over to them, and sealed on the conscience by the Holy Spirit. Thus they have an inward witness of deliv-

erance from the curse, with a legal title unto heaven, and a gospel-meetness for it. This meetness springs from regeneration, or a spiritual life begun and carried on in the soul, as a preparation for the spiritual worship of heaven. And the spiritual life differs from the merely moral one, as animal motion differs from mechanic motion, or as a man's walking differs from a clock's going. The clock may go well, but has no animal life; and a man may walk well, yet have no spiritual life.

Now Sir, observe the case of mere professors. They talk of honesty and decency, and feed upon their withered moral skeleton; but know not how to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ. An application of the gospel blessings to their heart, is neither sought nor wanted. They hear that Jesus Christ has died, and are satisfied with this report; but his blood, the virtue of it, must be sprinkled on the conscience, or it avails them nothing; will neither bring them gospel-peace, nor gospel-holiness. Paul and Peter speak of the sprinkling of this blood; and through this sprinkling, the atonement is received by a sinner, and his heart is sweetly drawn to love and follow Jesus. Nothing but partaking of Christ's blessings, will effectually engage the heart to Christ; then he draws us with the cords of a man and the love of Christ constrains us.

All the blessings of salvation have been purchased by Jesus, and are at his disposal. He gives them when and where, and how he pleases. And do you not expect, Sir, to dispose freely of what you have bought fairly? Jesus saith, I give eternal life unto them; and what is freer than a gift? And lest you should think

him an usurper, he declares, and pray observe his declaration, "All things are delivered unto me by my Father." All persons and all blessings temporal and spiritual are at my disposal, surrendered into my hands by the Father on account of my undertaking the work of mediator.

So Jesus reigns, in his human nature, king supreme, disposing of all persons and all blessings, as he pleases; and must reign, till all his foes are made his footstool. Then the kingdom will be administered as before, not by the hand of this God-man mediator; but God, three-one God, will be all in all. In the mean time, Jesus calls and quickens whom he will, gives repentance and faith, bestows pardon, and justification, affords grace to sanctify believers, and perseverance to bring them safe to glory. Thus the faithful say with David, Salvation is of the Lord; and sing Hosannah's not to their own wisdom, strength or merit, but to God and the Lamb forever.

Indeed, Doctor, I must cudgel you; I can hold no longer. My patience is worn down to the stump, and the stump is going. What a cypher you make of the poor grazier; and what a hobby-horse of human nature! According to your account, she has no more eyes, ears or hands to help herself, than an oyster. Why, your picture of nature is so horrid black, it would even frighten a chimney-sweeper! What! have I no power in myself to begin the Christian life: and when begun, no strength to carry it on? Am I in debt to Jesus Christ for every thing?

Please to drop your cudgel, Sir, and I will give an answer. A vapouring staff does not suit my fancy. You are indebted unto Christ for every good you

possess, and to yourself for all the evil you commit. Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of every good thing in the spiritual, rational and animal life; he is alpha and omega in them all.

No animal has life till he gives it; and no animal has power, when in life, to prolong its life a moment. It may eat and drink; yet food and liquor are not life, but means of life. We live not by bread alone, but by the word of God. That word, which brings food, must give it blessing, and then it will nourish.

When Christ creates an ideot, all the schools in the world cannot give him reason, because he is born without it.

And where a rational nature is given, and means used for its cultivation, still they are but means, which profit some, and help not others, though alike diligent. Every opening of the understanding, every improvement in science, and every invention in handicrafts, with all skill in working, comes wholly from Jesus, who is called the light of men, and calls himself the light of the world. He opens a budding understanding, as he opens a budding rose.

Whatever light men have, it proceeds from Christ alone. And he can give this light gradually; or give it all at once, as he did to Adam, and as he did to Bezaleel and Aholiab, two brick-makers, who were furnished immediately with wisdom of heart, and skill of hand for engraving, carving, embroidery, and all kinds of work.

He can make men forget their native language, and speak divers others in a moment as he did at Babel; or he can make men retain their native language; and speak divers others, in a moment, as he did at Pentecost.

Courage too procceds from Jesus. When he would exalt a nation, five of them shall chase a hundred; and when he would depress a nation, they shall fly when none pursue.

Neither has a rational nature any power to preserve itself. A philosopher, engaged in study, and surrounded with literature, may turn an ideot, or fall distracted in a moment; and he would do so, if not supported secretly by Jesus; his visitation preserves our spirit.

Where the animal and rational nature are given, a man is yet void of life spiritual, till Jesus Christ bestows it; as void of life spiritual, as an ideot is of life rational. And as none but Jesus could give an ideot rational life, so none but he can give a rational man spiritual life.

This life was lost at the fall, and never is recovered till Jesus quickens us. And till this life is recovered, men are only christian ghosts, having semblance without substance, resting on a broken bed of duties, and will find as much relief from it, as a hungry stomach from a painted feast.

Paul, I suppose, alludes to the spiritual life, when writing to a christian church, stiled elsewhere spiritual men; he prays that spirit, soul and body may be preserved blameless; which three portions, make up what he calls the OLOKLEROV of a christian man, or the whole lot of nature assigned him by the Lord.

When spiritual life is given, a man is born of the Spirit, and finds divine communion through the Spirit; but has no power in himself to preserve the life which is begun; no more power to continue or enlarge his spiritual life, than his rational or animal life. Means

of grace must be used, but these are nothing more than means still. The support, increase and continuance of the spiritual life are wholly from Jesus in whom we live and move and have our being.

Why Doctor, you talk most amazingly of Jesus Christ; I never heard the like before. Some people only vamp him up as a prophet and trample on his blood; and some who like to live as they list, shew a Jewish heart, and call him an impostor; but you make him God Almighty, our Creator and Preserver and Redeemer. Truly, I would give him all his due, but must have his honors fetched from the Holy Bible, and not from human brains. My bosom sweeps away all cobwebs, whether spun by a spider or the Doctor. Give me some fair and plain account of Jesus Christ from the scripture: I love the Bible, and can credit what it says.

Now you talk like a man, Sir. When you lifted up your staff before, I began to think of packing up my alls. A cudgel is too hard an argument for me. But since you ask for the Bible, I am well content to stay and tell you what it says of Jesus Christ. Before he had a human nature, he created all things by his divine power, all matter, and all animals, and all spirits human or angelic. St. John says, All things were made by him: and Paul enlarges on St. John's words, saying, "All things were created by him, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible; all things were created by him, and for him; that is, by his power, and for his glory. Here his Godhead is equally proclaimed, by his creating power, and by creating all things, for his glory. Now, Sir, if Jesus Christ created all things he cannot be a creature; otherwise

he must create himself, and so have had existence, before he had a being.

Paul goes on and says, Jesus Christ is before all things. Grammar rules required him to say, Jesus was before all things; but he breaks his well known grammar rules, and says, he is before all things, to shew his eternal unchangeable existence; and Jesus did the same, when he said, Before Abraham was, I am.

Paul adds further, By him all things do consist, all things material, human, or angelic are held together, stand fast, and sustained by him. And again, Jesus upholds all things by the word of his power.

Paul sufficiently declares the divinity of Christ, by calling him the express image of his Father's person. As the impression of a seal on wax exactly answers to the seal itself, line for line, and is the express image of the seal; even so is the Son the express image of the Father. Whatever line of divinity is drawn on the Father the same is impressed on the Son. Whatever wisdom, power, justice, truth, patience, kindness, mercy, &c. are found in the Father, the same must be found equally in the Son, else he is not the express image of the Father's person. If any attribute is in the Father, which is not in the Son, or is possessed more perfectly by the Father than by the Son, then the Son is not the express image of the Father.

Paul asserts, that all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ bodily; that is, the divine nature of Jesus, containing all the fullness of the Godhead, dwelt in his body, and inhabited it as a temple; just as the schechina, or glorious presence of God, inhabited the holy of holies in the first Jerusalem temple; which temple was a type of the body of Christ.

Jesus says, All things whatsoever the Father has are mine, belong to me also.

Again he says, I and the Father are one, not one person, but one thing, one nature, one substance, one essence.

He further affirms, "No one knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any one the Father but the Son." The divine understanding of the Son and the Father are equal and reciprocal, alike infinite in both. Our translation is often faulty in rendering EDEIS no man, and TIS any man, instead of no *one* and any *one*.

On these accounts, Jesus declares, "Whoso hath seen me hath seen the Father." My divine nature expressly bears the essential image of the Father; and as God-man, I am his manifestative image, a visible representative of Jehovah, displaying his divine perfections in such a manner by my words and works, that whoso sees me has in effect seen the Father. Nothing more is found in him than in myself: whatsoever he possesses I possess.

David himself speaking to the Son, says, Thy throne O God, is forever and ever. And could the Son speak to the Father in more lofty language.

John calls him absolutely God, who made the worlds; and extolls his love to mankind, by saying, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us"

Paul says, "He was God manifest in the flesh," and affirms that according to the flesh, or his human nature, he sprung from the fathers of the Jewish nation; but in his other nature was God over all blessed forever, and ratifies the assertion by a solemn Amen.

Thomas calls him my Lord and my God, and is commended for his faith; but others are commended more, who should thus believe on him though they have not seen him.

Isaiah calls him "the mighty God, a just God and a Saviour," who says "Look unto me and be saved."

Jude calls him "the only wise God, our Saviour." And he is called the only wise God, not to exclude the Father and the Spirit from an equal share of divinity, but to exclude every one who is not by nature God. So when Jesus says, "no one knows the Father but the Son," he does not mean to exclude the Holy Ghost, who is by nature God; "for the Spirit searches all things, yea the deep things of God." And in this sense we say to Christ in our communion service, "Thou only art holy," not intending to exclude the Father and Spirit from this holiness, but every one who is not by nature God.

Jehovah is the incommunicable name of the true God, denoting his everlasting permanent existence; and God declares this by calling himself *I am*, which expresses the meaning of Jehovah. Now the psalmist affirms that the name Jehovah belongs to none but the true God, saying "Thou whose name alone is Jehovah art the most high over all the earth;" yet this name is given unto Christ in the old testament. I mention only one place out of many, "This is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord (in the Hebrew, Jehovah) our righteousness."

Jesus takes to himself the incommunicable name, saying, "Before Abraham was, I am," and thereby intimates to the Jews that he was the very I AM who spake to Moses at the bush; the God of Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob, who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, gave them his law at Sinai, and led them by his cloud, and fed them with his manna in the wilderness.

Paul tells you that the God, the I AM, who was tempted by the Israelites in the wilderness was Christ, "neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents."

"John ascribes eternal existence unto Christ, saying, The life was manifested, and we have seen it and shewed unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." Well Sir, are you growing weary of this scripture evidence?

No, no, Doctor, you have me fast by the ears; I love scripture much, but hate your logic, for I have suffered by it. Lately, as I was riding to market, I overtook a very spruce fellow, who quickly let me know he was a philosopher. I can, said he, dispute upon a broomstick for half a day together; I can take any side of any question, and prove it first very right, and then mighty wrong. Indeed, Doctor, these broomstick disputers had almost choused me out of Christ's divinity. Yet, go on Doctor, I am not weary but am all attention.

Sir, I obey your orders cheerfully: it is a favorite subject, and concerns me much. If Jesus Christ is not truly God, he cannot save me; no atonement can be made by his death. Neither need he come from heaven merely as a prophet to instruct me. He might have taught me just the same things by the mouth of Paul or Peter, as by his own mouth; and they might have confirmed the truth by their death as well as himself. But they could make no atonement on a cross for sin; none but a real God-man can do this. And now, Sir, I proceed.

God claims divine worship, as due only to himself; "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." And Paul makes idolatry to consist in paying service or worship to them that are not gods by nature. If therefore Jesus Christ is not God by nature, he ought not to be worshipped. Yet when the Father brought his son into the world, he said, "Let all the angels of God worship him." And that multitude of the heavenly host, which brought the shepherds tidings of a Saviour, no doubt did worship him accordingly.

Many patients that came to Jesus for a cure, did worship him, and without a reprimand for so doing.

All his disciples worshipped him very solemnly at his ascension.

All angels and glorified saints pay him worship in heaven, "saying, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!" What a number of words are heaped together in order to express the highest worship and the deepest adoration! Yet lofty men cannot submit to worship Jesus, though the angels do it joyfully.

Again, "Every creature in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, say, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever." Every creature is here represented as paying, and every creature will at length be forced to pay this homage and worship equally to the Father and the Lamb, which never would be paid unless Christ was truly God. For thus the Lord declares, "I am Jehovah, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another," that is, to

any other who is not Jehovah. But Jesus Christ's name is Jehovah too, and therefore he shares equal glory with the Father.

Jesus, as Jehovah, is the object of prayer. The apostles say, "Lord increase our faith."

All petitioners who applied to Christ for help, presented their prayer to him, and expected help wholly from him; excepting Martha who is gently reproved for not doing so. Martha says, "I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, he will give it thee." Jesus tells her, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." You talk of God's giving me whatsoever I ask, but know assuredly, that I have life in myself, and raise a soul or body unto life when I please.

Stephen says, Lord lay not this sin to their charge, and commends his departing soul, as true believers do, into the hands of Jesus. And who but Jehovah, is worthy of, and sufficient for such a trust?

Paul, in a prayer, put the Son's name before the Father's, "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work."

In the new testament, christians are thus described, "they call upon the name of Jesus Christ" This was an outward distinguishing mark of Christians in the apostles' day, but some lewd professors in our day esteem it the brand of idolaters.

It is the Father's will, that all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father; should pay the same adoration and worship to the Son in his human nature, as they pay to the Father The human nature, taken by the Son, veiled his divinity, and might seem a bar

against divine worship. Therefore a command is given, first, that all the angels should worship him at his incarnation, and then, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. The union of the two natures shall be no bar against divine worship. And every one who withholds this honor from the Son, withholds it from the Father, and dishonors him. For "he that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father, who hath sent him."

When you direct a prayer unto Jesus, you need no one to introduce you, but may go directly to him now, as they did aforetime when he was on earth. As man he receives the addresses of men, and as God he is worthy of them, and abundantly able to supply all wants. But when you pray to the Father or the Holy Spirit, that is, to the Godhead absolutely, then you must go through the Mediator, as the only ground of your acceptance.

We are baptized equally into the name of the Father and the Son, and thereby make equal profession of faith, worship and obedience to them both. But if Jesus Christ is not Jehovah, raise him up as high as the shoulder of an Arian can lift him, he is still much more beneath the Father than a worm is beneath himself. For there can be no proportion between finite and infinite. Therefore if Jesus Christ is not Jehovah, to couple him with the Father in the same baptismal dedication, is a thousand times more unseemly than to harness a snail and an elephant together. And what is said of the Son in this article, equally respects the Holy Ghost.

Jesus Christ is appointed the judge of quick and dead; but how can he execute the office, unless he is

Jehovah? His eye must survey every moment all the actions, words and thoughts that are passing every where throughout the earth; and his memory must retain distinctly all the amazing number of actions, words and thoughts, that will have passed from the world's creation to its dissolution. If but a single wickedness, committed in a sinner's bosom, escapes him; or a single cup of cold water given unto any in the name of a disciple is forgotten, he cannot judge right judgment. Now, if you think a creature's comprehension can survey and retain all these things; (and modern faith, though straining at a bible gnat, will swallow a hundred camels,) still I ask, how can Jesus know the hearts of men unless he is Jehovah? This prerogative belongs to God alone.

Solomon prays in this manner, "Jehovah, God of Israel, thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." And Jehovah says of himself, "I search the heart, and try the reins."

Now Jesus does the same, therefore he is Jehovah, and qualified to be a judge. He shewed while on earth, that he knew what was in man, he knew their thoughts, disclosed the inward reasonings of their hearts; and declares concerning himself, "that all the churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and hearts," and being able to do this, he is qualified for judge, and therefore adds, "I will give to every one of you according to your works."

The divinity of Christ proved a sad bone of contention among the Jews, who judged of him from his mean appearance, and not from his godlike works and words. At one time he tells them, "I and my Father are one." The Jews understood his meaning well, and

cried out, "we stone thee for blasphemy, because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

At another time he says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." I work with uncontrouled power, as my Father works; and all things obey me and my Father equally; and hereupon the Jews sought to kill him, because he said that God was his Father, (IDION PATERA, his own proper or peculiar Father,) making himself thereby equal with God. The Jews knew, though some among ourselves do not, what Jesus meant by calling God his own proper Father. They perceived by this expression, that he made himself so partake of his Father's divine nature, as an earthly son partakes of his father's human nature, which is the same in both; and that Jesus hereby would distinguish himself both from angels who are created sons of God, and from believers who are adopted sons; and for this expression, which seemed presumptuous and blasphemous, they sought to kill him.

On another occasion, Jesus took the incommunicable name to himself, saying, "Before Abraham was, I AM;" and this so enraged the Jews, that they took up stones to cast at him. Now stoning was the legal punishment for blasphemy.

When Jesus is accused of blasphemy, for making himself God, he never refutes the charge; but either vindicates his high claim in a covert way, (which was needful then, that his death might not be hastened) or he passes over the charge in silence. And is silence in such a weighty matter consistent with the character of Jesus? If he had not been Jehovah, surely it behoved him, when called a blasphemer, to tell them

plainly, "You mistake my words, I am not God, nor did I mean to call myself so."

This charge of blasphemy pursued Jesus through his ministry, and at length nailed him to the cross. At his trial, he is first brought before the Jewish council, where some frivolous things are urged, but nothing proved. Then Caiaphas stands up, and says, "Art thou the Son of the blessed?" Christ's appointed hour was now come, and his answer is no longer covert, Jesus says, I AM. The high priest, knowing the meaning of his words, rends his cloaths, and says, "what need have we of further witnesses? Ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?" And they all condemned him as guilty of death.

Next he is hurried before the bar of Pilate, to have their sentence confirmed. Here again some idle matters are first urged, but not regarded by the governor. Jesus is accused of aspiring to be king, but satisfies Pilate by declaring, his kingdom is not of this world. At length the capital charge of blasphemy is brought, which finished the trial. "We have a law, say the Jews, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. Pilate hearing this, was much afraid; and going to the judgment-hall again, says to Jesus, whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate says, Speakest thou not unto me; knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee? Jesus answered, thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it was given thee from above: Therefore he that delivered me unto thee, hath the greater sin." This answer somewhat checked Pilate, but an outcry from the Jews quickens him, and he passes sentence.

Thus both at the bar of Caiaphas, and Pilate, the capital charge brought against Jesus was blasphemy, or the calling himself in a peculiar sense the Son of God, and thereby making himself *equal* with God. For this he was condemned to die; and he suffered death, as a blasphemer, for laying claim to divinity. And were he now in Britain, a multitude of those, who are fed at his altar, would lift a heel against him, and hale him to a gibbet, and cry out as before, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the gallows, and we will believe that thou art the proper Son of God, neither an adopted Son, nor a created Son, but the only begotten, the eternal Son of the Father."

Perhaps they might go further, so great is their zeal, and having crucified the Saviour on a false charge of blasphemy, might crucify his followers on a base pretence of idolatry. There are those who dare publish muttering words about it; those who like to live upon the alms arising from the Lord's service; and can say genteelly, hail master, and betray the master's honor, as a friend of old did.

When Jesus says, The Father is greater than he: and that the Son is ignorant of the day of judgment; these things must be ascribed to his human nature. As touching his Godhead, he is equal to the Father, being declared to be one with the Father, one in nature, and bearing his express image; but as touching his manhood, is inferior to the Father. His human nature, we are told, grew in wisdom and stature, which supposes a finite boundary. And though at last the kingdom of Christ will be delivered up to the Father, this may be understood of his mediatorial kingdom. All things are administered at present by

the hand of Jesus, as God-man mediator; but when this dispensation ends, the kingdom will return to its original order; and when thus returned, it is not said, the Father will be all in all, but God (the triune God) will be all in all.

That the Son will not lose his essential kingdom, as God, when his mediatorial kingdom, as God-man ceases, seems plain from these words of David to the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever;" which words ascribe an everlasting dominion to the Son, when his mediatorial kingdom is no more.

Thus, Sir, I have given you a summary proof of Christ's divinity from the Bible; and can you suppose that the scriptures would tell you plainly again and again, that Jesus Christ is Jehovah; is God; the true God; the mighty God; the just God; and God over all, blessed forever more, if he was not truly God? All these lofty expressions are applied to Jesus Christ, and they would naturally mislead plain men, yea, and would confound all plain language, if he is not truly God. A man must have the old serpent's subtlety, and chop and mince his logic mighty fine, who can banish Christ's divinity out of these expressions. But what then must become of the poor, who are the chief subjects of the gospel-kingdom? They cannot buy the spirit of subtle brains. They have nothing but the Bible; and if Jesus is not truly God, the Bible would mislead them; and so for want of a scribe's cap and dictionary they must all miscarry truly.

You have heard before, that the wise are taken in their own craftiness; and now, Sir, hear how the Lord takes them. Gins and snares are scattered in his

word to catch a subtle scribe: just as traps are laid by us to catch a fox. Every fundamental doctrine meets with something, which seems directly to oppose it: and these seeming contradictions are the traps which are laid. A lofty scribe, who depends upon his own subtlety, and cannot pray sincerely for direction, is sure to be taken in these snares; but an humble praying soul escapes them; or if his foot be caught, the snare is broken, and his soul delivered.

Some things spoken of the human nature of Christ, and of his mediatorial character and office, are the traps laid about his divinity, to catch a modern scribe: as the meanness of Christ's appearance in Judea, was a trap to catch an ancient rabbi.

Isaiah has an awful word about these traps, which are laid around the Saviour's person. "He (Jesus) shall be for a sanctuary (unto some,) but for a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." And they were taken in the snare; for they crucified the Lord of glory, as a vile blasphemer.

No one has cause to complain of these traps, because the Holy Spirit's guidance is promised to all them, that seek it earnestly; and if men are too lazy or too lofty to seek this assistance, they are justly suffered to stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared and be taken.

But, Sir, if you would take a modern rabbi for your tutor, and seat yourself beneath his feet, and catch the droppings of his mouth; whither, whither must you fly for shelter? Alas! the modern scribes are just in such a hobble now about Jesus, as the Jewish

scribes were. Some said then, he is John the baptist; others said, no, he is Elias; and others contradicted both, and called him, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. So it was then; and so it is now. Some say, he is a mere man, as the Turks say; and such professors only need a pair of whiskers, to pass for musselmen. Others say, he has an angel's nature, but is a head and shoulders taller than the highest angel. Others contradict them both, and say, he is a God; but having lost a small article in St. Johns Greek gospel, he is not the God. Others laugh at this and say, he is no God at all but hoisted into Godship by his office; and must be worshipped in a lower strain, as wily courtiers worship princes, as starving levites worship patrons, as antiquarians worship rust, or as Christian men will worship mammon.

Again, while some affirm, he is not truly God, others affirm, he was not truly man, or had no real human nature; and so amongst them all, they have stript him worse than the Roman soldiers did, who took his cloaths, yet left his body; but these have run away with every thing. According to their various fancies, he is neither God, nor angel, nor man; and what else they can make him, I see not, unless it be a devil, as the Jewish scribes made him.

Thus Jesus proves a sad stone of stumbling to the lofty scribes, who flounder round about him, and bedaub him grievously, but cannot get up to him; and as every scribe grows sharper than his brother, some new nature is invented for the Saviour. And Sir, if you renounce the plain account of the Bible, you will find as many caps for Christ's head, as there are images in a scribe's brain.

If Jesus Christ is not truly God, all his apostles, excepting Judas, were idolaters; for they worshipped him with great solemnity at his ascension. Also all the christians of the first and purest age were idolaters; for we learn from undoubted heathen records that they prayed and sang praises to one Jesus, according to the character given them by Paul: "They call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord in every place." Yea, and all the angels too except the devils, are highly guilty of idolatry: for they sing delightful praises unto God and the Lamb, which adoration puts the devils, who are utter haters of idolatry, in a cruel rage at the book of Revelations where this worship is recorded; and makes them raise up human tools to vilify the book, and try to banish it from the sacred canon.

Enough, enough, Doctor; put no more sheaves upon the cart, lest you break it down. An overstocked market oversets it commonly: and a drove of lean proofs coming after these, may prove like Pharaoah's second drove of lean oxen, which devoured all the fat ones. I would have no more than just enough of the best fed goose: Cramming only breeds a surfeit. And I have heard enough to satisfy me, that Jesus is my maker and preserver, the God in whom I live and move and have my being, who deserves my highest worship and my best obedience. And it seems agreeable to common sense, that none can redeem a world, but the Maker of it. Yet I am still in the dark about your new covenant. How does it differ from the old; and how must I get a slice of the new? Nature, you say, cannot carve for herself; who then must do this office for her, and put the meat upon her trencher?

An answer to both your questions, will occasion some little repetition, Sir, yet not a needles one, since it respects the way to life, which is too commonly mistaken.

In a covenant of works, a man must work for life by his own will and power, or by the natural abilities with which he is endowed. He stands upon his own legs, and had need look well to them: for the tenor of this covenant is, do and live: transgress and die. A single trip ruins us all, as in angels, so in Adam: but if the whole is kept without a flaw, a right to life is purchased by virtue of the covenant promise.

In the covenant of grace, all things are purchased for us: and bestowed upon us, graciously or freely.

These two covenants are called the old and new: no more are noticed in scripture; and a suitable law respecting both is mentioned, the law of works and the law of faith. All other laws are the cobwebs of human brains, such as the law of sincere obedience, the law of love, &c. For love and obedience are fruits of faith and not the law of the new covenant.

And now, Sir, God himself shall tell you by the mouth of Jeremiah, what the new covenant is. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, not like that I made at Sinai; but this shall be the covenant, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people; I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sins no more." And to this St. Paul alludes, Heb. viii. 8, &c.—x. 16, 17.

Ezekiel describes this covenant more minutely, I will "sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be

clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and all your idols; I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you; and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes."

The new covenant is here shewn to consist of a rich and gracious bundle of free promises, in which I will and I will runs through the whole. God does not say, "Make yourselves obedient, and then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, to wash away guilt;" but he says, "I will do both; I will pardon you, and make you obedient also; yea, I will do every thing, and do it by my Spirit. Not your own might, but my Spirit shall sanctify your heart, and engage your feet to walk in my statutes."

This covenant is too glorious for nature to behold; she shrinks from the dazzling sight; fears woeful consequences from it; and trembling for morality, beseeches the vicar to marry Moses unto Jesus, and couple the two covenants. From this adulterous alliance springs the spurious covenant of faith and works, with a spruce new set of duties, half a yard long, called legally evangelical, or evangelically legal; unknown to Christ and his apostles, but discovered lately by some ingenious gentlemen.

However, Jesus does not thank old nature for her fears. He has promised in his covenant to provide a new heart, and good feet, as well as justification and pardon; and what he promises he will perform. Jesus does not want the staff of Moses; nor will the master of the house suffer an alliance with his servant.

And so much, Sir, for the nature of the new cove-

nant. Your next question was, how do we become partakers of it? Now the blessings of this covenant were all purchased by Jesus, and are lodged in his hand to dispose of; free pardons to bless a guilty sinner, free grace to sanctify his nature, with full power to lead him safe to Canaan. Jesus therefore says, "Look to me, and be saved; come unto me, and I will give you rest." But the bare command and invitation of his word will not bring us to him.

Nature lost her legs in Paradise, and has not found them since: nor has she any will to come to Jesus. The way is steep and narrow, full of self denials, crowded up with stumbling blocks; she cannot like it: and when she does come, it is with huge complaining. Moses is obliged to flog her tightly, and make her heart ache, before she casts a weeping look on Jesus. Once she doated on this Jewish lawgiver, was fairly wedded to him, and sought to please him by her works, and he seemed a kindly husband: but now he grows so fierce a tyrant, there is no bearing him. When she takes a wry step, his mouth is always full of cursing; and his resentments so implacable, no weeping nor promise of amendment, will appease him.

Why, Doctor, you have got into your altitudes; I do not understand you. Figures are above my match; I could never get through arithmetic. Pray let us have plain English.

So you shall, Sir. Man is born under the law of works, and of course is wedded to that law; it is the law of his nature. Traces of the moral law are still upon his heart: the fall has blotted the two tables, but not defaced them wholly. Where revelation is

bestowed, the tables are renewed, as at Sinai; but wrote as yet in stone; not on the heart; recorded in the sacred volume, but not engraven on the inward parts. By means of this outward revelation and the moral sense, men acquire some notion of a covenant of works. This covenant suits their nature, and is understood in a measure, though neither in its full extent, nor in its awful penalties. Jesus begins his lectures, with the law of works, somewhat known to the scholar, and urges that law on his conscience with vigour to drive him to the law of faith. The young Israelite is called to mount Sinai, where Jesus trains his people now, as he did aforetime. And till the heart has had a thorough schooling here, and heard and felt the thunders of the law, it will be hard and stony. It may be pitiful to others, but want compassion for itself. It may weep at a neighbour's ruin, but cannot truly feel for its own. The bosom is bound about with wrappers of obedience, so that when the curses of the law are heard, they only tingle in the ear, and graze upon the breast, without piercing the conscience. The man knows not his real danger; the law of works refreshes him; and while he sips comfort from his faint obedience, Jesus Christ is only used as a make-weight; like the small dust thrown in a scale to turn the balance.

Now the legal heart is crushed at Sinai. There Jesus by his Spirit sets the law home upon the sinner's conscience; who then feels that the curses in the law are his proper portion; not because he is the chief of sinners, but because he is a sinner. Thus his bosom is unswaddled, the heart begins to bleed, the mouth is stopped quite, all legal worthiness is

gone, he stands condemned by the law, and all his hope is fixed on Jesus. While the law was only written upon paper, he found no galling condemnation. His heart like the stony tables received the letter, and felt no impression; but when the commandment reached his inmost soul, then he died. This makes a free salvation highly needful, a whole Saviour truly precious, and a pure covenant of grace delightful. And now the scholar comes to Jesus Christ, with cap in hand, and bended knee, and bleeding heart, and with St. Peter's gospel prayer, "Lord, save, or I perish."

Being thus convinced of sin, his heart can have no rest till he receives a pardon, and finds that peace of God which passes understanding. He feels a real condemnation; and must have absolution, not from man, but from God. Once he prayed for pardon, and rose up from his knees contentedly without it. His heart was whole; he did not want a pardon; nay, it seemed a presumption to expect it. Yet sure what we may *ask* without presumption, we may *expect* without presumption. But now the scholar sees his legal title unto heaven is lost, and finds a legal condemnation in his breast besides, which makes him hasten to the surety, and call upon him, as the Lamb of God who takes away our sins, and as the Lord our righteousness. He views the surety, as his law-fulfiller; both as his legal title, and his legal sacrifice; and he wants an application of these blessings to his heart; an application by the Holy Spirit to witness that they are placed to his account.

He sees a need, that both the legal title and the legal sacrifice should be imputed, to answer all the law's

demands. And he marvels much, that any, who allows the imputation of Christ's death, should yet object to the imputation of his life. Since if the obedience of Christ's death may be imputed, or placed to our account for pardon; why may not the obedience of his life be imputed also for justification, or a title unto glory? One is full as easy to conceive of, as the other; both are purchased by the surety; both are wanted to discharge our legal debts; and both will be embraced and sought with eagerness, when our debts and wants are truly known. But here the matter stops; men do not feel their wants, and so reject imputed righteousness. The heart must be broken down, and humbled well, before it can submit to this righteousness. Till we see ourselves utter bankrupts, we shall go about to establish our own righteousness. We cannot rest upon the surety's obedience, the God-man's righteousness, as our legal title unto glory.

But, Sir, this is not all. Every one who is born of God is made to hunger for implanted holiness, as well as thirst for imputed righteousness. They want a meetness for glory as well as a title to it; and know they could not bear to live with God, unless renewed in his image. Heaven would not suit them without holiness, nor could they see the face of God without it. And, having felt the guilt of sin, and the plague of their sinful nature, by conviction from the Holy Spirit, this has taught them both to dread sin, and loathe it; to loathe it for its deformity and vileness; and to dread it for the curse it brings. They view and detest it as the poison of the moral world, the filthiness of the spirit, the loathing of an Holy God, and

such an abomination, as nothing but the blood of Christ could purge away.

And, Sir, where imputed righteousness is not only credited as a gospel doctrine, but received by the Holy Spirit's application, it produces love to Jesus, tender love with gratitude. And this divine love not only makes us willing to obey him, but makes us like him, for God is love.

Christian holiness springing from the application of imputed righteousness, is a glorious work indeed; far exceeding moral decency, its thin shadow and its dusky image. It is a true devotedness of heart to God, a seeking of his glory, walking in his fear and love, rejoicing in him as a reconciled Father, and delighting in his service as the only freedom.

Full provision is made for this holiness in the new covenant, and Jesus, the noble king of Israel, bestows it on his subjects. Let me repeat his words; "I will give a new heart, and put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." Believers look to him with prayer and faith, and by looking are transformed into his image, and taste the blessed fruits of Canaan, before they pass the banks of Jordan.

But, Sir, the holiest christian can put no trust in his holiness. His daily seeking to grow in grace, proves his holiness defective. *Tekel* is wrote on every duty. "Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting." And he knows the meaning of those weighty words, applicable both to soul and body, "verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity." His utmost holiness and his freest services do not answer the demand of God's law, and if depended on for justification in any measure, would bring him under the

law's penalty and condemn him. He is there forced to fly out of himself entirely, and seek a refuge only in Christ.

Nay, Doctor, you must not take your gloves out yet, nor hand your staff, as if preparing for a march. I have a bag of foxes at my side, which must be let out one by one before we part. If you can hunt them down, it will be well; if not, they may spoil your sheepfold and worry all your doctrine.

Sir, I am sick of foxes. My father gave me one, and I am bound to keep him during life. Every day he troubles me, and I scarce know how to keep him chained in his kennel, he is so crafty. His kennel and your bag, I suppose are just the same, nothing but a human breast. And sure no fox is half so full of wiles as the human heart.

Well, but Doctor, I must open my bag: pray, take a peep on this young cub, and listen to his chatter. "Faith, he cries, what is faith? Every simpleton who has learnt his creed, may believe, though he cannot reckon twenty. Puh! I would not give a straw for all the faith of all your ancient and modern saints, not I; give me a budget of good works. Faith! what can faith do? A poor empty thing, without a grain of merit. The other night I waited on friend Sarle, your honest neighbor, and supped in his hen-roost, amidst a deal of cackling music. When I marched off, a straggling goose was hard at hand, and I was much inclined to ask her to my lodging, for company is pleasant, and the night was dark; but my stomach being crammed well with poultry, and a barking dog appearing, I let the waddling dame go off quietly. This noble act of mercy, such as christians often shew, must

justify me more than a thousand of your piteous acts of faith." You hear, Doctor, how he chatters.

Yes, Sir, so I could chatter once: and we are apt to undervalue what we do not understand. But all possessors of divine faith esteem it highly, and call it as St. Peter does, "precious faith." It brings a precious view of Christ, and draws precious blessings from him. It is a grace which quarrels much with human pride, and makes its only boast of Jesus. It is not meant to be our justifying righteousness, else it might learn to boast too. Faith says, "in the Lord have I righteousness;" and tells a sinner, "I cannot save thee." "Thou art saved by grace through faith." The grace of Jesus brings salvation; and through faith, as an instrument put in the sinner's hand, he is enabled to reach the grace; just as a beggar, by his empty cap stretched forth, receives alms.

A pole held to a drowning man, and by which he is driven to land, saves him just as faith saves a sinner. In a lax way of speaking we are said to be saved by faith; and so the drowning man might say he was saved by the pole, though in truth he was rescued by the mercy of a neighbor, who thrust a pole towards him, and thereby drew him safe on shore.

Faith could have no room in a covenant of grace, if it had any justifying righteousness of its own. For desert on man's part is not consistent with such a covenant; "else grace is no longer grace."

If any personal or relative duty, such as temperance or charity, had been made the instrument of obtaining gospel blessings, we might fancy some peculiar worth was in that duty to procure the blessings. But when faith, which is only lifting up an empty hand or a

longing eye to Jesus, is made the instrument of salvation, it is clearly shewn that the covenant is of grace wholly, both in its contrivance and conveyance. "It is therefore of faith, that it might be by grace."

God has chosen this foolish instrument as the means of receiving salvation, "that no flesh might glory in his presence." Yet foolish as the instrument may seem, it is of curious heavenly workmanship. No man with all his wit can make it, though many act the ape and mimic it. This foolishness of God is wiser than men; they cannot comprehend it, but growl at God as dogs howl at the moon.

Doctor, I must open my bag again; young cubs, I find are not regarded by you. Pray cast a look upon this old fox: see what a marvellous long beard he has! Sure he must have been as old as Cain, and hunted oft by Enoch. He bears a very decent countenance you see, and though a secret thief all his days, he will preach about good works and hope to make a penny of them: but hear him.

"None can justly claim more merit than a fox. He nightly watches every neighbor's fold and hen-roost; and, like an upright justice, takes up every vagrant that he meets. Yet, notwithstanding all our vigilance, we are often vilified as evil doers; and are told by zealots that our good works will not justify us. Faith, you know, is not a fox's traffic; our commerce lies in works, and by good works we live. Yet some lately laid us on so thick with texts of faith, that we were gravelled by them, till an ancient Reynard started up and said, 'why sure the Bible can afford more justifications than one.' This proved a lucky thought, and was happily pursued. One fox started a brace pre-

sently; another sprung a leash; and a third found two brace sitting. You may think our hearts were much refreshed by these reports, and the justifications were in this order; first by faith alone; then by works alone, then by faith and works conjointly; and then by neither faith nor works. We are pretty sure of escaping, by one or the other of these methods, and are determined to try them all round. In the mean time, we have fixed on works for the first hearing, because the doctors tell us, that faith can only justify us upon earth; but they add, though works cannot justify us here below, they may chance to justify us in the world above. For, say they, who can tell what the next world is, and whether heavenly beings think so highly of good works, as foxes do? Cain, Ahithophel, and Judas, one in each dispensation, are retained as our counsel, who have promised to exert their utmost. And we do not doubt it, because they have been cast into the first trial for want of faith; and their next chance lies like ours, in the merit of their works." Well, Doctor, you have heard this subtle orator: what think you?

I think, Sir, if he gives a testimonial, the fox may turn a Levite. His creed might suit a modern pulpit, and a sheep-fold would suit him; it affords good picking: but to the business. The obedience of Christ, our surety, is the ground and meritorious cause of justification. Paul asserts, "We are justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." He declares roundly, by the obedience of ONE (even Christ) shall many be made righteous; and affirms, that the righteousness of God (the God-man surety) is unto all and upon all, that believe, is imput-

ed unto all that believe, and put upon all, as their justification robe. David will make mention of this righteousness, and of this only (to justify him.) Isaiah tells you what the church's faith was in his day, Surely in the Lord have I righteousness, and Peter writes to them, who have obtained precious faith (not through, but) in the righteousness of our God and saviour, Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, Paul says peremptorily, By the deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified in God's sight, and intimates, that a justification by works would destroy the covenant of grace, "to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt;" that is, if any could justify himself by works, his reward would be a legal debt, and not the gift of gospel grace. This text alone if their was no other, would exclude all justification by works, as inconsistent with a covenant of grace. For if we are justified wholly by works, the reward would be wholly of debt; if justified in part, it would be partly of debt. But God has no debts to pay in the gospel: it is the grace of God which brings salvation; and no flesh shall glory in his presence.

Thus the Bible declares, that no man shall be justified before God by his works; that men are justified by faith; and that faith only justifies, by resting on the obedience of Christ, as the meritorious cause of justification.

But this matter may require some enlargement. The scripture comprehends all wicked men in the general name of unbelievers; and Jesus says, "he that believeth not, is condemned already." How is that? Why every man is a sinner; and the law de-

clares, the wages of sin is death. Of course sentence of death is passed on every sinner; and if he dies in unbelief, he needs no second condemnation, because he is condemned already. But the sentence of the law is a silent verdict, not heard and felt by unconvinced sinners, else they would fly to Jesus: neither does the law declare the various measures of that death, which are due to various sinners; it only says in general, "Cursed are you, and ye shall die."

Hence we may learn what is the judge's office at the grand assize, not to pass a second condemnation on the wicked, but to make an open declaration of that secret verdict, which the law has passed; and then appoint the various measures of that death, which are due to sinners.

When a jury, in our courts of justice, finds a culprit guilty, the judge passes sentence. But is the judge's sentence a second condemnation? Not at all. The jury condemns the culprit, and the judge pronounces sentence according to the jury's verdict, and then declares the punishment to be inflicted on the convict.

A sinner therefore is not first condemned on earth for want of faith, and then condemned in the clouds a second time for want of righteousness. No: his state of misery is finally determined by unbelief? He that believeth not, shall be damned; but the measure of his misery depends upon the measure of his own iniquity. Unbelief alone condemns the sinner; and in consequence of that condemnation, he suffers punishment according to his crimes.

We may now consider, how it fares with believers. Jesus says, "Whosoever believeth in the Son of man, shall not perish, but have eternal life." And it is

further said, He, that believeth in the Son, hath (or possesses) everlasting life. Here we read, that faith gives a present possession of everlasting life; it is begun in the soul on earth, and shall be perfected in heaven; and to strengthen the believer's hope it is added, he shall not perish. A full absolution from eternal misery, and a full promise of eternal life, with a present possession of it, is granted to believers on the mere account of faith. And what security can they further want or have?

Again: It is said, all, that believe are justified from all things. Now I ask, if believers are justified already, what further justification can they need? And if justified from all things, what further justification can they have? It is not possible to be justified from more than all things.

The scripture speaks of a first and second covenant, but no where speaks of a first and second justification. Such a twofold justification must suppose there are degrees in it; and that the latter increases the former, else it is needless: but this is quite repugnant to its nature. For justification is an individual whole, like an unit. Take any thing from an unit, or add any thing to it, and it ceases to be a unit. So the man who is truly justified from all things; and such an one cannot possibly be more than justified, nor can he be less than justified.

Beloved John might have more of Christ's affection than Philip, and a brighter crown than Philip, but could not have more justification than Philip. Because, though there are degrees in the affection and rewards of Christ, there can be no degrees in his justification. A man must either have the whole or

none at all; must either be justified from all things, or be condemned.

And now, Sir, the justification which has passed secretly in a believer's breast, known indeed to him and declared, but derided by the world; this will be notified publicly by the judge at last, and degrees of glory be assigned to each, according to their various fruitfulness.

Thus a believer's state of happiness is finally determined by his faith; "He that believeth shall be saved:" but the measure of his happiness in that state, depends upon the fruits of faith. Faith alone saves a Christian; but his crown is brighter, according as his faith works more abundantly by love.

But another matter must be taken into this account, besides the declaration of the proper sentences, and assignment of the proper retributions. David says, "The Lord will be justified, when he speaketh (sentence;) and be cleared when he judgeth." The world neither know nor regard the faith, which is of God's operation, but are content with one of human manufacture: and finding no advantage from this faith, they consider all faith as a trifling or despicable matter. It appears such an idle business, as can never justify; and seems a reflection upon God, to assign that office to it: yea, and all that wear the gospel cloak of faith, full and deep, are thought enthusiasts or impostors; men who have lost their wits, or lost their honesty, and only fit for Bedlam or for Newgate.

Now when Jesus judges, he will clear this matter up, and vindicate the credit and appointment of faith. He will shew what fruits have been produced by faith; and though they cannot justify the little flock before

God, yet when openly proclaimed by the judge, they will justify him in the choice of the instrument, and will justify believers evermore from all aspersions cast upon them by the world, as if they were not zealous of good works, because they renounced all dependance on them.

Take notice, Sir, how the judge speaks to the sheep on his right hand. A choice fruit of faith, the sanctification of the heart, our meetness for glory, is not even mentioned by him; because the world could be no witness of it: he only notices their works and only such of these as must be public and notorious. "I was hungry, and ye fed me; naked, and ye clothed me; a stranger, and ye took me in; sick or in prison, and ye visited me." And what say the sheep to this honorable mention? Do they speak, as if expecting to be justified by their works? No: just the contrary. All think themselves such unprofitable servants, that they will not own a good work has been done by them. "Lord, say they, when did we so, or so, as thou hast spoken?"

Jesus next applies himself to the goats on his left, and takes notice of their unholy hearts: for being strangers to the nature of holiness, they would have cried out: "Lord we always had good hearts; much sounder than those sheep upon your right, who were evermore complaining of their loathsome hearts." Jesus therefore directs his speech to their morality, and only makes mention of good works, of which they had some knowledge, and by which they expected to be justified. Here he shews they have been wanting, and confounds them in their own hope. Thus the judge clears himself, when he judges. The sheep

are justified by faith ; and that act is vindicated to the world, by the precious fruits of faith. The goats are condemned through unbelief, and silenced by that unrighteousness, which unbelief produced.

It is observable, that not a single sheep expects to be justified by works ; yet all the goats expect it. When Jesus tells them, "I was hungry, and ye fed me not ; naked, and ye cloathed me not ; sick, and ye visited me not, &c." They answer briskly "When saw we an hungered, or a thirst, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" That is when were we wanting in our service to thee? Thus they come with a full justification in their mouths, ready for the trial : yet are all confounded.

It is further observable, that Jesus does not charge the goats with never having done any acts of charity. No ; some of them might have founded schools or colleges ; or have given largely to the Lock and Magdalen Hospitals ; and some might have undone themselves by largesses before or at elections. But when a goat is bountiful, he seeks to please his own humor, or glorify his own name, or promote a distant interest : no true regard is had to Jesus, nor to his little flock : these are always overlooked. The doctrines of the sheep are loathsome, and their bleating trade of prayer is nauseous to a goat. He could wish the world well eased of them all. Therefore Jesus says, "Whatever bounty ye have done, inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me ; in neglecting and despising my own family, ye have neglected and despised me. Therefore, depart ye cursed."

Give me leave to twist another thread about a lash

which you had before. If the glories of the next world are called rewards, they are affirmed to be rewards, not of debt, but of grace: not due for our works, but bestowed through the grace of Jesus. Eternal death, in all its various horrors, is the just deserved wages of sin: but eternal life, in all its various glories, is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And therefore, though the little flock may be rewarded according to their works, they cannot be rewarded for the merit of them. A man of plain sense may see a difference here with his naked eye, which yet is often not discerned by a scribe with his micriscope.

Take an illustration. A tender-hearted gentleman employs two labourers out of charity, to weed a little spot of four square yards. Both are old and much decripit, but one is stronger than the other. The stronger weeds three yards, and receives three crowns: the weaker weeds one, and receives one crown. Now both the labourers are rewarded, for their labour, and according to their labour, but not for the merit of their labour. You cannot say their work deserves their wages. And yet their work deserves their wages better an hundred thousand fold, than our poor works can merit an eternal weight of glory.

Oh, Sir, God must abominate the pride, the insolence of human pride, which can dream of merit: it is enough to make a devil blush: Yea, and some would purchase heavenly mansions with such scraps of alms, as would not buy an earthly cottage.

What comes from God is a gift, and much he has to give, but he has nothing that he sells for work which we can do. He disdains such paltry commerce, and

the saucy tribe of merit-mongers, who can fancy God will sell his heaven, and that their works may purchase it.

Sir, remember, traps are laid around every fundamental doctrine; and I perceive your lips are heaving an objection to the present doctrine. Poor John, disguised in the beard of Moses, and beloaded with the Sinai tables, is suborned to betray his master, and compelled thus to speak, "Blessed are they, that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life." But, Sir, if rewards are not debt, as Paul affirms, they are not due for our works; and if not due, our works have no right to the rewards, no right to the tree of life; neither does St. John assert it. A mask is put upon his face, to hide his look and meaning.

The word, (EXOSIA) which we translate a right, signifies here, as frequently elsewhere, a gracious privilege. Thus in his gospel, John says, "As many as received Christ, that is, believed on him, to them he gave (EXOSIAN) the privilege (as you read in the Bible margin) to become the sons of God;" a privilege, not claimed as a right, through the merit of faith; but bestowed freely, as a gift. "To them he gave the privilege to become the sons of God."

Jesus says, "He that believeth, possesses everlasting life." Then by believing, he must surely enter the city gates, and taste of the tree of life. For if a believer should miscarry, the life he possesses, proves not an everlasting life, but temporary; and the word of Christ falls to the ground.

But a general answer may be given to all objections of this kind. St. John says, "They, that do his

commandments have a privilege to the tree of life." If you ask what is meant by doing his commandments, I answer in one word, believing. Nay, Sir, do not start like a young colt; but hear and judge like a man. Working for life is the law of Moses: believing for life, is the law of Jesus. And where divine faith is truly found, it will effectually justify, really sanctify, and surely glorify. It will bring a sinner out of Egypt, through the wilderness, into Canaan, and fairly perch him on the tree of life.

Hear St. Paul's account of faith: a choice apostle, but no great favorite of the scribes. Human telescopes do not magnify Paul; he is not within the compass of their glasses; no moon-light planet, but a star: and take the matter in his own words. "Made wise to salvation by faith—become children of God by faith—justified by faith—receive forgiveness of sins by faith—sanctified by faith—receive the spirit through faith—access to God by faith—Christ dwelling in the heart by faith—work righteousness through faith—obtain promises by faith—walk by faith—stand by faith—saved by grace through faith—And St. Peter adds, kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

Thus the Christian life, is a life of faith in the Son of God; and the Christian work is to fight this good fight. Believing is the Christian's trade and maintenance: through Christ it obtains pardon and holiness, creates his present peace and future prospects, makes him steady and valiant in fight, and brings him triumphantly to glory.

And now, Sir, when you hear the Philippian jailer asking Paul, "What must he do to be saved?"

You need not think the answer was defective: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." This answer of Paul is transcribed from his master's copy: "Go ye into all nations, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." But if Paul's answer was not defective, it is plain that as *doing* was the sum of the law, so *believing* is the sum of the gospel.

It is the total life of all duty and the total term of all salvation; including and producing all obedience, yet crucifying all merit. Faith owes its birth and growth and blessings all to Jesus; and it rests wholly on him, renouncing self and glorifying in the Saviour as all in all.

However, since professors frequently amuse themselves with fancies instead of faith, and think a mere assenting unto scripture doctrines is believing in Christ Jesus, something is often joined with faith, to prevent deception. Thus Paul declares, "In Jesus Christ, nothing avails but faith, which worketh by love." The words, *worketh by love*, are added, as the genuine fruit and evidence of faith. If works of love are not produced, the faith is not of God; yet when produced, they do not justify.

Perhaps you might be pleased to know St. John's thoughts about keeping the commandments, because the text was quoted from him; and his mind is intimated in his first epistle. "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another." Does not the latter clause declare, that believing on Jesus is keeping the commandments? Love

indeed is added here, as before by Paul, yet only as an evidence of faith, and a guard against delusion.

Jesus Christ explained the moral law, for the conviction of sinners, and for a rule of life to believers; but when he declares the terms of salvation, nothing is mentioned but faith. It is never said, he that believeth *and obeyeth* shall be saved: but absolutely, he that believeth shall be saved. Here, obedience is designedly kept from our eyes, and withdrawn from faith to prevent our resting on obedience, as a condition of salvation, or a ground of justificatian.

The apostles also give many rules to direct the walk of faith, and often couple faith with love or obedience; and declare the faith which produces not good works, is a dead faith, the cold product of a human brain, and cannot justify. If faith is alone, unattended with works, it is not the faith of God, and does not unite the soul to Christ, and cannot draw life from him.

But when the apostles speak expressly of justification, you hear of nothing else but faith; then it is "justified by faith—saved by grace through faith—believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." At such times, like their master, they purposely drop obedience, to prevent a reliance on it for justification.

When Paul is largely handling the point of justification, he quotes a passage from the Psalms, and introduces it with this preface, "Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, 'blessed are they, whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Here Paul breaks off the quo-

tation, and omits the latter clause of the verse, "in whose spirit there is no guile." And why does he omit the latter clause? Because it describes the renewed nature and the fruit of a justified person, which were not to be considered in the matter of justification, but wholly withdrawn from our eyes.

We are not justified before God, because our natures are renewed: but God justifies the ungodly through believing. A sinner can be saved no other way, because the wages of sin is death; yet it proves a most offensive way, through the pride of a sinner's heart.

Effectual and final justification by faith, is the capital doctrine of the gospel, a most precious grace of the new covenant, and the everlasting glory of the Redeemer. A man may steal some gems from the crown of Jesus, and be only guilty of petit larceny, he may escape at last like the cross-thief; he may escape through the fire when his house is in a flame: but the man who would justify himself by his own works, steals the crown itself, puts it on his own head, and proclaims himself a king in Sion by his own conquests.

Since therefore faith is the law of the gospel, the term of salvation, the instrument of obtaining every blessing, and the general commandment including all the rest; it must utterly exclude all justification by works. And the man who seeks to be justified by his passport of obedience, will find no passage through the city gates. He may talk of the tree of life, and soar up with his paper kite to the gates of paradise, but will find no entrance. The gates belong to the prince of life, who is the real tree of life; and only

they shall enter who own him for their liege lord, and place their whole dependance on him, and seek a passage through his grace entirely. Such shall have a cheering taste of the tree below, and a joyous feast above.

You are peeping on my bag, Doctor, for another fox, and here he is; a pretty brisk fellow, truly! How sharp he looks, and casts a gloating eye on you, as if he had a message for you; and now he opens. "Doctor, I have listened to your talk as I lay in the grazier's bag, and believe you are a greater fox than myself. Let the grazier look well to his purse, or he may find your fingers in it presently. I have many works to boast of, but you have none it seems, and therefore raise a racket about faith. I must speak my mind freely, else my conscience will be loaded. All the honest foxes look upon you zealots, as a set of crafty villains; and they would not trust a pullet's neck in any of your hands, notwithstanding all your sheepish looks. None can peep into a breast, you know, and there the instrument of faith is kept, which hooks down salvation. But these hooks, instead of being gospel hooks, may chance to prove fish hooks; and I suppose you are angling for the grazier now, to catch him. The other night, as I was sauntering to a neighbor's hen-roost, I overheard some people talking of a slippery trick, lately played by a juggler. It seems he talked high of faith, and called himself a deep professor, and he proved much too deep for shallow people there. His nimble tongue first gained their admiration, then their confidence, and then their purses. He borrowed many pretty sums, and having fairly caught them with his fish hook, he prudently

retired. This may prove a caution to the grazier, not to snap at your baited hook, but to rest upon his good works as the foxes do." Why, Doctor, this fox is quite a master of arts, and seems a notable advocate for good works. And I must confess, some check seems wanting in the covenant of grace. Cheats will arise: and how must we deal with them, Doctor?

Deal with them, Sir! why, hang them, when detected; as Jesus hanged Judas. He had one religious cheat among his twelve, who made a penny of his master, but did not live to spend it. This Judas bids you guard against such cheats, but not be scandalized at the gospel, when they happen. You would not sure renounce honesty, because you have been cozened by a man, who made a false pretence of it: nor would I renounce my creed, because a sly professor proved a thief, and has been hanged.

But, Sir, you quite mistake the matter, in supposing that the gospel does not guard against licentiousness. A covenant of grace cannot allow of legal conditions, which may procure a right to life, in whole or part; this would destroy the nature of the covenant. But it abounds with gospel checks, which answer the same purpose; and where they do not prove sufficient, nothing else would.

Naked faith, or a whole and simple trust in Jesus, is the gospel-instrument, which brings salvation. But though faith alone, apart from its fruit, is the saving instrument; yet it cannot be alone, or without its fruit, where it is saving faith, as St. James declares. And the gospel to prevent delusion, shews what is the fruit produced by faith. It brings heavenly peace, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. Faith

is genuine, where these fruits are found. The believer is a real branch of the true vine, and receives his fruit from it. The fruit shews the branch to be alive, but does not make it so: it bears fruit, because it is alive.

Where these fruits are neither found, nor truly sought, faith is not of God's operation; it is a dead, and not a living faith. It may be clear in scripture doctrines, but has no real union with Christ, and of course no influence from him. It is not grafted in the vine, but tied to it with profession thread, and so is dead and withered. But, Sir, the fruit of faith does not justify a sinner; and this must be oft repeated, to check a legal heart, which is only moved by legal fears and hopes.

None feel the force of gospel motives, till they taste of gospel blessings. Hell and a gallows (proper checks in their place) keep some out of mischief, who find no comfort, nor expect any in God's service; and a fond hope of making purchases in heaven, puts some on alms-giving, fasting and prayer. Such only make account of obedience, as of a thing whereby they must be saved; and being told it cannot save them, because it is not perfect, they ask in much surprise, what then is it good for? Why Sir, it is good to glorify God for the mercy of a rich and free salvation; a grateful homage paid to a gracious God. And it is further good, to evidence the truth of faith to ourselves and others.

When joy and peace are found through believing, and the sweet atonement is sealed on the conscience, a Christian cries out, "I am bought with a price, and must glorify God with my body and my spirit, which

are God's. With Paul, he can say, "the love of Christ constrains me," and feel its sweet compulsion. Gratitude begins to act; and love sharpens gratitude; and sights of glory, fetched in by faith, quicken both.

The legal hope of being saved by our doings, is rooted deep in every human mind, and never can be rooted up till grace has overcome it. It made a busy stir, when the gospel first appeared; and has raised ferments ever since.—Very early, some cried out, "Except ye be circumcised, ye cannot be saved." Had they suffered circumcision, as believing it a duty still required, and purposing by such obedience to glorify God; or had they used it, like Timothy, at Paul's instigation, for a more convenient spreading of the gospel, no harm at all had been done. But when they seek to be saved by this doing, Paul takes fire, and cries out, "Behold, I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised (with this view) Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man, that is (thus) circumcised, he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect to you, who are justified by the law: ye are fallen from grace."

The Galatians did not seek to be wholly justified by works: no; they blended the two covenants together, as modern Christians do, and sought to be justified from both; partly from their own works, and partly from Christ. This appears from Paul's saying, Christ is of no effect to you who are justified by the law; Christ shall profit you nothing. Which implies, that the Galatians did expect some effect and some profit from Christ as well as some from their works. Again, when Paul says, "Ye are debtors to do the whole

law;" this also shews, they did not count themselves such debtors, but only sought a partial justification, by sincere obedience to the law.

The apostle's meaning in the fore-cited passage is plainly this; Whoever seeks to be justified in any measure by his works, such a one falls from grace, and becomes a debtor to do the whole law. Christ will justify you wholly, or none at all. Either take him as a whole Saviour, or he profits you nothing, is of no effect to you.

It matters not, whether the work be ritual or moral, that we seek to be saved by; whether it be parting with our cash or our flesh; if we seek at all to be saved by any work of our own, we fall from grace. Therefore when Paul had spoken first of circumcision in particular, he next affirms of the whole law in general, that whosoever is justified by it, is fallen from grace.

Paul was eminent in ministerial labours and Christian holiness; yet in the point of justification, he counted all things but loss, in comparison of Christ. His labors and his holiness, if rested on in any wise for justification, would have brought him loss instead of gain, and made Christ of no effect to him. He therefore desires to be "found in Jesus, not having his own righteousness (to justify,) but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith." In other words, he desires to be found at the bar of God, not in his own personal righteousness, but in the righteousness of his heavenly surety.

But you are waiting for more gospel-checks, I perceive, to prevent the abuse of faith. What think you, Sir, of this, *faith working by love*? It passed muster

lately, yet wants to be reviewed; good troops are often exercised. It is a two edged sword, which slices off the wanton ears of an antinomian, and the saucy hopes of a legalist. Faith is here described as a working principle, an heavenly root producing heavenly fruit; and thus it slays Herodians and Sadducees. But though a working faith, it works not for hire like a labourer, but like a son for love. A child of God does not hope to purchase heaven by his works, but seeks with loving heart to glorify an heavenly father for the mercy of adoption; and thus faith crucifies a pharisee.

If you enquire of Habbakkuk and Paul, who are lodged in the same apartment, both the Old and New Testament saint will tell you, "The just shall live by faith." Here they give you a believer's character; he is a just or righteous man. Yet they declare he does not live by his righteousness, does not gain a title unto life by it: he lives by faith. His new nature makes him hungry for implanted righteousness, as a meetness for heaven; but his faith bids him seek an imputed righteousness, as his title to heaven. He follows after righteousness, as his proper business and delight; but sings at his work with Isaiah, "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and in the Lord shall glory."

Again, you read, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." A legalist would see the Lord by his holiness, by the merit of it, but he cannot; and an antinomian would see the Lord without holiness, but he must not. Thus a christian man can neither see the Lord without holiness, nor by it. Which, though a truth, may seem a mystery to many.

Lastly, the gospel declares roundly, that whosoever "liveth in the works of the flesh, in adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresy, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. For all, who live and die in such works, plainly shew themselves destitute of that faith, which purifies the heart and works by love.

And now, Sir, I trust you will no more complain, that faith is destitute of proper guards; no earthly monarch need be better guarded. If any more foxes are left in your bag, pray lug them out; I must be going presently.

Doctor, you shall have another quickly; I am dragging out his heels; and here he is: but, see how he grins at me! Sure I do not half like his countenance. What is the matter, Reynard?

"Matter enough, master grazier! Why am I cooped in a bag, and bereft of liberty? I was born in a free country, and have a right to breathe free air. If I trick a lamb out of your fold sometimes; do not you trick a butcher too with poor sheep? And does he not trick his customers with lean mutton? And do not they trick the butcher often out of his money? So your tricking like the year goes round; and the best of you is but a fox to his neighbour. When we borrow lambs or geese, necessity compels us; we must live by our wits, or not at all. You are satisfied we have no convenience for breeding lambs or poultry: and if we had, there is reason to suspect you would make as free with our folds and henroosts, as we do with your's. If harmless hares cannot well escape

you, neither would our lambs and poultry. Besides, an honest fox, when taken in a henroost, no more complains of dying, than your good christian folks complain of hanging, when taken in a burglary. But this we do complain of, as a very partial thing, that some of us, a little remnant, are picked out from the rest, and have wholesome food and lodging in a stable yard, while the rest are doomed to destruction. I am bagged for a haunt, and every day must live in fear of hounds; while the smirking fox inhabiting a kennel, lives every day in peace and plenty, like a gentleman. No reason can be given for this arbitrary choice, since all our natures are the same; and if bad, are but as we received them; nor can we make them better. We foxes often talk about morality, and like it full as well as you; but we cannot live by honesty, it proves our utter ruin, and so we practise it as little as yourselves. Oh, master grazier, if you can reconcile this partial conduct towards foxes with common equity, never quarrel with your Bible election. We have not wronged you as you have wronged him that made you; and we may claim far better usage from you, than you can claim from your Maker."

Why, Doctor, this fox preaches like a methodist: he must have been a curate at the Tabernacle, or some recruiting sergeant to the Countess: but he shall have a hunt to-morrow for his saucy sermon: I cannot bear the subject. Our vicar always shakes his head, when he hears of election; and the schoolmaster makes a woeful wry mouth at it. He will let his face down amazingly, when the word is only casually mentioned. I am disgusted at the doctrine; it is a

frightful notion, exceedingly discouraging, and seems not consistent with common equity. What think you of it, Doctor?

Sir, I think the doctrine of election never can agree with human merit; one will be always barking at the other. Every man, who seeks to justify himself by works, will loathe the doctrine heartily, and load it lustily with most reproachful names. Yet men reject the doctrine, not for want of scripture evidence, but for want of humbled hearts. We are not willing to be saved by an election of grace, till we know ourselves, and find our just desert.

A furnace is the proper school to learn this doctrine in, and there I learnt it. Nor men nor books could teach it me; for I would neither hear nor read about it. A long and rancorous war I waged with it; and when my sword was broke and both my arms were maimed, I yet maintained a sturdy fight, and was determined I would never yield; but a furnace quelled me. Large afflictions, largely wanted, gave me such experience of my evil heart, that I could peep upon electing grace without abhorrence: and as I learnt to loathe myself, I learnt to prize this grace. It seemed clear, if God had mercy for me, it only could be for this gracious reason, because he would have mercy; for every day and every hour, my desert was death.

Sir, the colour rises in your face: and I shall take a hasty leave, unless your staff is laid upon the floor. The fox, I find, must have a hunt to-morrow, for the hint he dropt to-day; and the least I can expect is bastinading. I know the rancour of the human heart against this doctrine, for I have sorely felt it; and

charitably thought that all its teachers were the devil's chaplains—Sir, I go directly, unless your staff is dropt.

Here take it, Doctor, in your own hand; and then you may be easy; but pray be very brief upon this matter, lest my choler should arise. I cannot stand a long fire upon election ground; and if your words are very rough, you may bring on a furious handy-cuff. For your own shoulder's sake, do not lay me on too thick and hard.

Plain speech Sir, is the best: such I give, and give without bitterness. If gall should mingle with my words, it will not drop from my lips, but trickle from your heart.

I ask then, are you not a sinner? and is not death the wages of sin? And very *just* wages, because appointed by a *just* God? As a sinner then, you deserve death; and every man that sins, deserves it also. And sinners, at the judgment day, will be condemned, not because they were decreed to be damned; but bebecause they revolted from God, and broke his righteous laws, and sought no hearty refuge in Christ Jesus, "The Son of man will gather out of his kingdom all them, who do iniquity, and will cast them into a furnace of fire."

No sinner then, can urge a claim on God; for every one has forfeited his life. God, if he pleased, might reserve them all for destruction, as he did the fallen angels; or he may reserve some for punishment, by leaving them to follow their own wickedness; and be gracious unto others, by granting them repentance, faith and holiness. And in shewing mercy unto these, he does no injury to others.

If you think that God may not withhold his mercy from some, while he shews it to others; or that he is obliged to shew it unto any, or to all, then he has no grace to give, but is a debtor unto man; and the covenant of grace is an empty name.

When traitors are condemned to die, it often happens that the king will spare some one at least, and hang the rest. And this act of grace may be shewn to one or more, without a charge of injustice to them that are hanged. One has cause to bless his prince, while the others have no reason to complain.

And shall not the sovereign Lord of all, be allowed to act in the same manner towards his rebellious subjects? Must his hands be tied up, that he cannot do what an earthly prince may justly do, shew mercy to some offenders without injuring the rest? This is hard indeed! But God will not be fettered by the cobweb cords, which human pride has weaved for him. He will have grace to give, and justice to inflict; and will be glorified in both.

The provision of a Saviour makes a way for God to exercise his mercy, in consistency with justice; but he may exercise it when and where he pleases.

The grace of God is called free: because it is free for God to give to whom he pleases. His grace is free, just as my alms are free; and grace is heavenly alms. Now my alms are free, because they are bestowed freely, where I like. If any could demand them justly, they would cease to be alms, an act of grace and prove a debt.

If men had due conceptions of the majesty and holiness of God; and of the traitorous nature, deep malignity, and heinous guilt of sin, their mouths would

soon be stopped. But men forget their real state of condemnation, and dreaming of a claim on God, through the fancied merit of obedience grievously worm eaten, they quarrel with the doctrine of election. And indeed the doctrine cannot harmonize with any human claim, arising from a pure covenant of works, or from the mongrel covenant of faith and works, transported from Galatia into Britain, and carried by her subjects to America. No; the doctrine of election is altogether built upon a pure covenant of grace, and shakes a friendly hand with this. Here God may grant, or may withhold his mercy, as he pleases; since all are in a state of condemnation, and none can justly say unto him, "What dost thou?" This Sir, may suffice to vindicate God's justice in electing grace; and his justice is well grounded upon equity: he needs no court of chancery.

Neither has this doctrine any real tendency to discourage sinners, when they truly seek salvation through Jesus Christ. It is not expected that any one should know himself a chosen vessel, before he seeks salvation; this must be known by seeking. He cannot peep into the rolls of heaven, to see if his own name is written there, nor does he need such a peep. His business lies with the written word on earth, which tallies with the rolls in heaven. "Secret things belong to God; but what is revealed belongs to us, and to our children forever."

Now in the written word, a decree of God is found, which shews, who are the chosen and the saved people; "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." The chosen people therefore are a race of true believers, convinced by God's Spirit of their

ruined state; endowed with divine faith, by which they apply to Christ for help; and seek to obtain pardon, peace and holiness. And an experience of these blessings brings assurance of election. Thus the written word unfolds the secret rolls of heaven. By grace a sinner is enabled to believe: and through believing finds salvation witnessed to his heart by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ, the bread of life, is freely offered in the gospel to every hungry famished soul. Such are prepared for the bread, and the bread prepared for such. And these should never pore upon the doctrine of election, but muse upon the gospel promises, and call on Jesus confidently to fulfil them. He turns no real beggar from his gate. His heart is lined with sweet compassion, and his hands are stored with gifts. He has supplies for all wants; legs for a lame beggar, eyes for a blind one, cordials for a faint one, garments for a naked one, a fountain for a filthy one, and a rope for a sham beggar, who asks for mercy, and yet talks of merit.

Every one who feels the plague of his heart, may come to Jesus. He gives them all a gracious invitation, and will afford a hearty welcome. Hear his words, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." In no wise! though vile as Manasseh, and guilty as the thief on the cross, or ten times more so, Jesus will in no wise cast him out. Strange tidings to a pharisee!

But a weary soul, who is sick, and poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked, should come just as he is, just as the patients in Judea did, and not stay to fit himself for a cure. This is a sorry trick of the le-

gal heart, which wants to purchase favor, and take the work out of the Saviour's hands. The feeling of our sickness makes us fit for the physician; and when we seek him, every fancied recommendation of our own must be cast aside, like the robe of Bartimeus, else it will twine about the feet, throw a sinner down, and prevent his walk to Jesus.

It is the Saviour's office, as it is his honor, and his heart's delight, to save a sinner freely; to call, and wash, and heal, and clothe, and feed a prodigal at his own expense. He asks no recommendation but our misery and helplessness. He relieves his patients now, as he relieved them in Judea, out of mere compassion. All that seek in his appointed way, will be saved graciously, and love the Saviour heartily. He makes them happy, wise and holy, and they give him all the praise. He puts the crown at last upon their head, and they return it to his feet, as a due acknowledgement that the crown was purchased by his merit, and bestowed through his mercy. Thus Jesus will be ever glorious, ever lovely in a ransomed sinner's eyes; and eternity will seem too short to utter half his praise.

Now, Sir, what discouragement can you find in this doctrine to make it frightful? The gospel bids us "give all diligence to make our calling and election sure." Such as feel their ruined state, are graciously invited to partake of mercy, and all who seek with diligence, are assured they shall find; and when they find the peace and "love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost," an inward evidence of their election is obtained, and by growth in grace is confirmed.

Thus an awakened sinner who feels his misery, has no cause to be alarmed at the doctrine; and a sinner fast asleep, will commonly despise it. He wants no drawings of God's Spirit, he is wise enough to draw himself; nor needs a shepherd's care to fetch him to the fold, he is strong enough to fetch himself; nor can bear the Lord should say, "I have chosen you," he is old enough to choose for himself. He can climb into the fold by his own nimble limbs, and keep himself there by his ready wit: no thanks to the shepherd. And he looks and talks so bravely, one is almost grieved to hear the shepherd say, "a climber is a thief," and by that word condemn him to the gallows.

Sinners perish through security; and this doctrine of election brings a little friendly thunder to arouse them. They think salvation is the work of man; and presume they may repent and turn to God just when they please, to-morrow or the next day, as well as in the present day; and so are unconcerned about it. But here they find an awful truth, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." It is therefore time to look about them; to ask, and seek, and knock, lest the door should be shut.

But what avails our seeking, you reply, unless we are elected? Sir, I say again, your business does not lay with the secret rolls of heaven, but with the written word on earth: and the written word declares, "ye shall seek and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Whoever thinks himself an elected person, and does not seek as God requires, with all his heart, will find himself most dreadfully confounded. And such as seek with all their heart,

yet doubt of their election, will find at length that God is their covenant-God in Christ. And when by seeking, they have found him so, they will sometime be made to see that grace alone, electing grace, gave them both the will to seek, and the power to find.

None can come to Jesus, except the Father draws them. Yet sinners do not perish because they cannot come, but because they will not come. Jesus says, "ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." Man's ruin lies wholly in his own perverse will. He cannot come, because he will not. help enough is provided, were he willing; but he will not heartily accept of Jesus, as his only Prophet, Priest and King; his heart will not submit to be wholly saved by grace through faith.

When the will is well subdued, and grace alone subdues it, Christ is ready for a sinner, and the promises invite him sweetly unto Christ. "Whosoever will, let him come," and again, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come."

Thus salvation is of the Lord alone, and damnation wholly from ourselves. Men perish because they will not come to Jesus: yet if they have a will to come, it is God who works the will in them; grace, electing grace, both draws the will and keeps it steady; and to grace be all the praise.—Well, Sir, any more chattering foxes in your bag?

Yes, Doctor, one more; but the last served me such a trick, I have no heart to drag this other out It may answer full as well, to borrow Reynard's face, and play the fox myself.

Your doctrine of election, I confess, is bravely sweetened by another portion of your creed, called

perseverance. If the former seems a sour pill, this is quite a honeycomb. I never heard till lately of this doctrine, and I learnt it then by accident. Last midsummer I went to Gamble fair, and when the market was well over, a knot of graziers, old acquaintances, dined with me at a public house. Being seated round a table, a pert young fellow stepped into the room, who swung his hat into the window, and thrust a chair among us to partake of the ordinary. His name, we learnt afterwards, was Mr. Fulsome. He was mighty still at dinner, and played his knife and fork exceeding well; no man did better. But when the cloth was removed, and some few tankards had gone round, Mr. Fulsome's face looked like the red lion painted on my landlord's sign, and then his mouth began to open. He talked swimmingly about religion, and vapoured much in praise of perseverance. Each fresh tankard threw a fresh light on his subject, and drew out a fresh head of discourse. "No sin, he said, can hurt me. I have had a call, and my election is safe. Satan may pound me, if he please; but Jesus must replevy me. What care I for drunkenness, or cheating, or a little lying? These sins may hurt another, but they cannot hurt me. Let me wander where I will from God, Jesus Christ must fetch me back again. I may fall a thousand times, but I shall rise again; yes, I may fall exceeding foully."—And so he did, Doctor; for instantly he pitched with his head upon the floor, and the tankard in his hand. The tankard was recovered, but no one thought it worth their while to lift up Mr. Fulsome; nor did he rise from his foul fall, according to his prophecy: we left him silent on the floor when the shot was paid. Oh, Doctor, what must we say of such professors?

The very same, Sir, that Paul says, "their damnation is just." Such scandalous professors are found at all times, in our day, and Paul's day; yet he would not renounce the doctrine of perseverance, but having given these licentious men their portion, he declares a firm persuasion afterwards, that "nothing shall be able to separate (true believers) from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."

Jesus Christ, the shepherd of the flock, declares, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Yes, he affirms, "the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, who hath mercy upon thee."

What right have you to pray for perseverance, unless it is a gift of the covenant? You may only pray for what is freely promised; and what is promised, has been purchased for believers; and being purchased for them, will be surely given to them, else the purchase were in vain.

Pardon of sin is promised, "I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sins no more;" therefore I may ask for pardon.

Grace is promised to subdue our evil nature; "Sin shall not have dominion over you, he will subdue our iniquities;" therefore I may ask for sanctifying grace.

Perseverance too is promised, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me;" therefore I may ask for persevering grace, and should ask with confidence, as David did. "The Lord," he

says, "will perfect that which does concern me;" therefore he prays, "forsake not the works of thine own hand.

God's promises are the foundation of our prayers; and were designed not to make the means of grace needless, but to stir men up to a diligent use of them. A gracious heart makes this use; but a corrupt heart turns the grace of God into wantonness, and no legal terrors would prevent it. The thunders, lightnings, and earthquakes, which shook mount Sinai, almost terrified the Israelites to death; yet a few days after, we find them brisk and jolly, setting up an idol, and dancing round it merrily. And such is human nature, almost killed with fear at an awful providence, yet laughing at that fear, when the shock is over. Nothing but the grace of God can set the heart right, and keep it steady.

The doctrine of perseverance affords a stable prop to upright minds, yet lends no wanton cloak to corrupt hearts. It brings a cordial to revive the faint, and keeps a guard to check the forward. The guard attending on this doctrine, is sergeant *If;* low in stature, but lofty in significance; a very valiant guard, though a monosyllable. Kind notice has been taken of the sergeant by Jesus Christ and his apostles; and much respect is due unto him, from all the Lord's recruiting officers, and every soldier in his army.

Pray listen to the sergeant's speech; "If ye continue in my word, then ye are my disciples indeed. If ye do these things, ye shall never fall. If what ye have heard, shall abide in you, ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father. We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold stedfast unto the end. Whose

looketh and continueth (that is, if he that looketh does continue) in the perfect law of liberty, that man shall be blessed in his deed."

Yet, take notice, Sir, that sergeant *If*, is not of Jewish but of Christian parentage; not sprung from Levi, though a son of Abraham; no centinel of Moses, but a watchman for the camp of Jesus. He wears no dripping beard, like the circumcised race; and is no legal blustering condition to purchase man's salvation, but a modest gospel evidence to prove the truth of grace. He tells no idle tales, that the sheep of Christ may perish; and a child of God mistake his way, while his guide is fast asleep, and ramble down to hell: but knowing there are various works, which are but mimics of a work of grace, h kindly stands on the king's highway of faith, producing peace and holiness; and tells passengers, if you continue walkin this way, your perseverance proves your faith is true; for faith which comes from God, endures, and brings men safe to God.

Perseverance makes us not in Christ, but shews we are so; unites no branch unto the vine, but proves it is united; merits not the crown of heaven, but shews our walk is heaven-ward, A persevering walk, is an evidence that we are blest with persevering grace; and are not of them who draw back unto destruction, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul.

When this little sergeant is neglected, and appears to be scouted, bad effects ensue. Chaffy hearers, resting on a shallow work, are dancing after all new doctrines, and stirring up confusion: Upright people often grow remiss, and through a sauntering foot are apt to trip, and lose their evidences: preaching too

becomes a sore travail; a needful rod for the preacher's back, to make him friendly with the sergeant; and occasion may be taken, by them who seek occasion, to revile the doctrine.

When Jesus says, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish;" this secures the perseverance of the saints. And when he further says, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;" this shews that actual perseverance in the way of faith and holiness, must be my evidence to prove that I am one of his sheep. A belief of the doctrine of perseverance cannot save me, without the grace of perseverance.

In the Old Testament, the saint's perseverance is thus expressed, "They that are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God; they shall still bring forth fruit in old age: they shall be fat and flourishing: to shew that the Lord is" upright; that is, faithful to his word, and does not forsake his people.

In the new Testament, perseverance is described by the good ground, which hears the word, and keeps it, and brings forth fruit with patience.

This doctrine yields no real shelter to licentiousness or laziness. If perseverance is promised to the saints; then I must be found persevering in the path of duty and the means of grace, else the doctrine condemns me, and destroys my evidence.

St. Peter exhorts all christians, to make their calling and election sure; not taking up this matter on light grounds, but using all diligence to be assured of it, "by adding unto faith, courage, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity." His meaning is, prove your grace by growth

in grace; where heavenly seed is sown, it brings a harvest. And there is need of such an exhortation. Appearances of grace and faith are often found, which flash and sparkle for a while, like meteors in the sky, and then vanish quite away.

Some, like the foolish virgins, bear a lighted lamp, and keep up christian fellowship, yet have no oil in their vessels, no grace in their hearts; some, like Judas, preach the gospel-word, and cast out devils from the hearts of others, but remain themselves the devil's bond-slaves; some, like stony ground, receive the word with eagerness, and find refreshment from it; yet having got no root, they take offence at persecution, and take their leave of Jesus: to some God gives another heart, as he gave to Saul, but not a new heart; and such may prophecy, as Saul did, for a season; and taste the joy which prophets taste; yet be rejected from the kingdom, as Saul was. The sower's parable instructs us that many are awakened, enlightened, and reformed in a measure, who seem hopeful for a time, yet having not a rooted faith in Christ, they dwindle quite away. These are awful evidences of that solemn and repeated word, "many are called, but few are chosen."

No dependence can be placed upon a present reformation, nor on short-lived impressions from the word of joy or sorrow: but a "growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus," must be sought as the crowning evidence of all the rest. The vineyard, which the Lord planteth, will be kept and watered by him every moment; kept by him, that none may hurt it; watered by him that it may thrive, and bear fruit. The thriving and fruit-bearing of a vine, discovers it to be of God's planting.

But you ask, are none recovered after sad and heinous backslidings? Yes, Sir; but not without the grace afforded of a bitter sad repentance. When backsliders live and die in a course of sin, without repentance, they are lost undoubtedly. This case is determined in both the Testaments, Jesus says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish." And Isaiah says, "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquities, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done, he shall die." Such final backsliding, is the case of all the stony and thorny ground hearers, and shews the heart was never truly brought to God. Men may seem to be religious, walk in righteous paths for a season, and be called righteous men, to distinguish them from the openly profane, and yet be unconverted men. By a sober education they may walk a while decently, as Jehoash did, though not devoutly; be civilized, though not evangelized; or they may hear the word from a Samuel's mouth, as Saul heard it, and become another man, as Saul did, but not a new man. If backsliders had been real children, God would have scourged them well with scorpions, and broken all their bones, as David's were, and fetched them home with streaming eyes and bleeding heart.

When repentance is afforded after heinous backsliding, a few examples are recorded in the scripture, to encourage such to call on God, and hope for mercy, and when Jesus breaks an heart for sin, his blood will heal it. But if backsliders fancy, they must all be restored by repentance, because David was restored, and Peter was; they might as well suppose, they must be all translated into heaven without dying, because Enoch and Elijah were.

To sin, presuming on repentance, and a future call, shews a case to be horrid bad indeed: this was not Peter's case, nor David's. The most alarming thunder in the book of God, is levelled at such horrible presumption. "If any bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk after the imaginations of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, (that is, sin to sin,) the Lord will not spare that man; but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man; and all the curses which are written in this book shall lay upon him."

Indeed, Doctor, I can see no reason to object against the doctrine of perseverance, when attended by the sergeant's guard. While they walk hand in hand together, the doctrine is a spur to diligence, and the sergeant is a check to wantonness or laziness. But how comes it that the world take such high offence at these doctrines, and loathe the preachers and professors of them? Nay, we are told, that some very honest folks, who are cast in a gospel foundry, often ring a fire-bell, to quench these very doctrines. And you may think it makes us titter when we hear a cry of fire, and see some engines from the foundry playing on the Tabernacle pulpit. It is pretty sport for us, when the gospel-men pull noses, and the gospel dames pull caps. Such frays make us laugh delightfully, and yield a venison feast for the 'squire and the vicar. "Now these rogues begin to quarrel, we shall hear of all their tricks," they cry. When the dean of Tottenham died, his chapels, we supposed, would tumble down of course; but they keep upon their legs, we hear: and the pulpits are becrowded most amazingly. Our schoolmaster is reputed a very top-

ping scholar ; he can write Italian hand, read a Latin dictionary, manage vulgar fractions, and give you twenty nimble reasons for every thing : and he says, the doctrines of grace will never be abandoned by those, who are tinctured with them. For every one who slips into them, drops into a quagmire, and is swallowed up directly. He compares the doctrines to Polyphemus' den, where many went in, but none came out; all were eaten up alive in the cave by the monster.

Sir, I perceive your schoolmaster is an arch fellow, and, like his neighbours, uses wanton tricks, to put modest truth out of countenance. A fool's cap thrust upon the head of a serious truth, or a grave judge, will make them both appear ridiculous, when nothing else could. However, truth will not be thrust out of doors, though often put to the blush. She may change her countenance, but cannot change her nature, nor will desert her post. Yet, if religious truth meets with lewd opposers, I must confess, she sometimes meets with wanton advocates, who claim acquaintance with her, and bring disgrace upon her, though she disclaims them utterly.

Scandalous professors are found in every age, who warp the doctrines of grace to sanctify their wickedness. Like the spider or the toad, every thing such men feed upon, they turn into poison. Paul speaks of these and says, "Their belly is their God, and they glory in their shame." Peter calls them "Spots in their love-feasts; sporting themselves with their own deceivings; cursed children ; having eyes full of adultery, and hearts exercised with covetous practices." And Jude can scarcely keep his temper, while he brands them, as "brute beasts ; filthy dreamers :

walking after their own lusts; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame: clouds without water, carried about with every wind: wandering stars, for whom i reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

Such professors, you see were found in the apostles days; and will arise at all times, and give a just offence to serious minds; and because these brute beasts are always babbling about faith and grace, this sets the world of course against the doctrines. They are condemned as poisonous, because abused by hypocrites; and every preacher of the doctrines is supposed to be an open or a secret advocate for vice. Even satan seems a much more harmless creature than a Calvanist. If he has got one cloven foot, a Calvinist, besure, has two.

But, Sir, the abuse of doctrines is no argument to prove the doctrines themselves are hurtful. The blessings of providence are full as much abused as the doctrines of grace: yet none reject the providential blessings, because of their abuse. If all my countrymen were drunkards and gluttons, this would be no argument for my rejecting food and liquor, but a good caution to use them temperately. And if my brethren, who profess the doctrines of grace, should all agree to wear them as a cloak for wickedness, this would be no reason for my rejecting the doctrines, but a strong caution not to wear the cloak myself. The apostles did not reject the doctrines of grace, because a wicked use was made of them: no more should you or I.

The common run of christians do not regard the doctrines of grace, yet thousands live in open sin, and cheer their hearts in sin, by saying, God is merciful.

The doctrines of grace cannot be more abused, than the mercy of God is; nor afford a sweeter handle for licentiousness: yet no horrid outcry is raised at this abuse. Many mind it not: and others pass it softly over, without saying, it is wrong. But sure God's honor is as much concerned in this abuse, as in the other. And since men can bear to have the mercy of God abused, but take a violent offence when the doctrines of grace are perverted, this shews that the mere abuse of these doctrines is not the chief ground of the world's outcry. The doctrines themselves are hateful, because they batter human pride, undermine all human merit, lay the human worm in the dust, and give the glory of salvation wholly unto God. Nature cannot bear this; she would not have salvation as a lost, but as a decent sinner: nor become an heir of glory by a mere election of God and faith in Jesus, but by some noble plea of merit; nor would she walk in duty's path, through the Holy Spirit's aid, but by her own gouty ankles. With some reluctance she endures to go snacks with Jesus, but will never bear to be wholly saved by grace, it is so pitiful a way, so much beneath her dignity! What? If she is become a captive, satan's captive, as she was once an empress, she will wear a crown, not through another's generous purchase, but by her own exploits, and decent share of merit.

It is not possible to preach the doctrines of grace, nor even to profess them, without the world's indignation and censure. If every preacher was a Timothy, and all professors were Nathaniels, still the world would hold them in abhorrence, think them satan's troops, and call them wolves in sheep's cloathing.

Paul affirms that himself and his fellow labourers were slandered as licentious men, who said "Let us do evil, that good may come." And Peter intimates, that all the christians were spoken against as evil doers. Now, Sir, if the preachers, in the purest age of the church, were slandered as licentious men; and professors were reviled as a race of evil-doers; it is no marvel, that the slander rolls along through all succeeding ages.

And what could give occasion to this slander? Not the evil conduct of the first preachers and professors, but their offensive doctrines, which made old nature rage. Preachers said, and converts did profess, that "men are justified by faith, without the deeds of the law; chosen of God before the foundation of the world; called by grace; kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; and saved not according to their own works but according to God's purpose and grace."

Such preaching, though attended with much practical instruction, appeared to the heathen intolerable. Loose as the gentiles were, they could loathe a christian for his supposed evil principles; and did condemn them all, apostles and their flocks, as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things.

And if this was the case in the purest age; what else can be expected in succeeding ages? But you say, we sojourn in a baptized country. True. the country swarms with baptized rakes, baptized worldlings, and baptized infidels. A watery profession, without the Spirit's baptism, will never wash the heart from pride, and subdue it to the gospel doctrines; and legal righteousness will set the heart still more against

them. No one can truly bear the doctrines, till he cannot bear himself.

Jesus Christ invites them, that are weary of themselves, and laden with their guilt and sinful nature. Only such received him in Judea, and only such receive him any where. These are prepared for his gospel; they know what poverty of spirit means, and feel that brokenness of heart, which God delighteth in, and where he only dwells.

These are the gospel subjects! but alas! how few! And where must we find them, in leather or prunello, in camblet or in sarcenet? They are a little flock indeed, who have been taught to say with Job, and say with deep compunction, "We abhor ourselves." Yet Job was called a perfect man, by one who knew what is in man: but Job wanted breaking down, before he could truly say "Behold, I am vile." And when the furnace had well melted him, disclosed his dross and made him loathsome to himself, then the work was done. The furnace cooled presently; his sorrow fled away; and peace and plenty smiled on him.

The doctrines of grace are utterly repugnant to the pride of human nature; yet none forsake the doctrines, who have gained a clear sight of them. They are abused by some, as every good thing is, but are abandoned by none. Errorists, who have received a ray of gospel light, desert their ranks frequently: but a Calvinist will never leave his standard; he dies at the foot of his colours. A clear sight of grace is so exceeding glorious, it keeps the heart steady to the doctrines.

Perhaps you think, a Calvinist maintains his ground because it is bestrewed with roses, and suits licentious

purposes. But, Sir, this calumny has grown exceeding stale. It was broached first in Paul's day, and poured on him liberally, and sprinkled on his hearers: and it has begrimmed his followers in all succeeding ages. If the slander attaches to us, it cleaves to Paul abundantly, for he first broached this offensive vessel which makes the human bosom rave with indignation.

These doctrines suit a contrite spirit; and are drank not as a Circe's bowl, to intoxicate the mind; but as a grace cup to cheer the heart, and keep it steady under trials. They do not prove a monster's den, as you suppose, where all are eaten up, who enter in; but a banquet house, where pilgrims find such sweet repast, they have no will to leave it.

If I seem tedious on this article, the misguided zeal of some, I hope, well minded people, has constrained me; who have taken most outrageous pains to blacken Calvinism. Whatever ridicule a sparkling fancy could suggest, whatever filth or ordure could be raked together, has been cast upon it. The looseness of a few is charged on all the rest; and a devil's coat is put upon a Calvinist, like some condemned heretic; and in this flaming raiment he is held aloft, as an horrid bugbear, to frighten simple hearted people.

Well, but Doctor, one thing somewhat gravels me, that these doctrines will not relish with the present age, though they are established. The law, the homilies, the articles, the prayer-book, all afford protection to them, and yet they cannot stand: pray, what makes them prove so rickety?

Sir, your question may be answered by another.

Can any good thing keep its head above water in the present age? If the doctrines of grace are rejected; is not the word of God despised too, and the house of God deserted, and the name of God blasphemed every where? The Bible, like an old almanack, is either cast out of doors, or cast upon a solitary shelf, to be buried there in dust, and covered with a winding sheet, weaved by a spider. How should the doctrines keep upon their feet when the Bible which contains them, is fallen upon the ground?

Unless a spirit of grace is poured out upon a land, the doctrines of grace cannot be heartily received, because they fight with every dictate of depraved nature. The first lesson to be learned in Christ's school, is, deny thyself, every thing that belongs to *self*; not self-pleasing only, and self-interest, but all self-sufficiency, self-will, self-potence and self-righteousness; and these are heavy crosses to be taken up.

The law was established with divine solemnity among the Israelites, yet they were evermore deserting this establishment, and warping to idolatry. And how were they reclaimed? By a prophet's mouth, you say: True. But a prophet's mere preaching could no more reclaim the people than a prophet's dancing. God gave a promise to his prophet. "I will pour upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication," and so the work was done. Where the spirit of grace fell, a change was wrought.

Even so it fares with the gospel, which can no more be kept on foot, than the law was, without a supernatural power. Men will desert the doctrines and the precepts of the gospel, for these go hand in hand; nor can human establishments prevent it. Es-

tablishments may keep up forms, but Christ alone can give the power. A fanciful alliance may be framed between church and state; but the church's whole support is from the church's head. The government is laid upon his shoulder; he will never prosper doctrines which oppose his grace; the preaching of such will be chaff and stubble, and the preachers will grow contemptible.

When a christian church becomes exceedingly depraved; when "its nobles are as ravening wolves; and its prophets daub them with untempered mortar; when its watchmen have grown blind, love to slumber, and are looking every one for his gain; and the people great and small, given unto covetousness: then, unless the Lord revives his work, by pouring out his Spirit from on high," the church's candlestick is quite removed, and she becomes a sister to the African and Asiatic churches.

Mahometism was the gulph provided by the Lord, for his abandoned churches to be drowned in. They first denied the God, who made and bought them, which drove them to the synagogue of Arius; another gentle step led them to the chapel Socinus; and half a pace more brought them briskly to the mosk of Mahomet.

Doctor, I am told by the vicar, that his brethren drop the doctrine of justification by faith alone, because it seems unfriendly to morality. And he says, the *Whole Duty of Man* was sent abroad as a public bellman, to cry the doctrine down. The clergy now are straining all their nerves, in support of common duties; and seem to fervent in this matter, that a jackdaw dares not perch upon the steeple, while they are

shouting in the pulpit for morality. They give a lash sometimes at fornication, when the 'squire keeps from church; but do exclaim against all thieving and hedge-breaking most delightfully. Indeed their lungs have been so often strained, by uncommon zeal for morality, that they are forced to wind up matters very speedily. Many cannot roar above ten minutes at a preaching, for want of breath; and others are constrained to keep a journeyman to shout for them.

Sir, morality, like beauty, is a charming object; but, like beauty, often is made up with paint. Such seems morality at present; a pretty play-thing, when dandled on a consecrated cushion, but it will not keep men from an ale-house. The people who are chiefly loaded with morality, are the booksellers; and they have got a shop full, but are sick of the commodity, and long to part with it. Though gilt and lettered on the back, it moulds upon a shelf, like any Bible; and Mr. Hale's tract on salivation, will post away through ten editions, before a modest essay on morality can creep through one.

The Whole Duty of Man was sent abroad with a good intent, but has failed of its purpose, as all such teaching ever will. Morality has not thriven since its publication; and never can thrive, unless grounded wholly upon grace. The heathens for the want of this foundation, could do nothing. They spoke some noble truths, but spoke to men with withered limbs and loathing appetites. They were like way-posts, which shew a road, but cannot help a cripple forward; and many of them preached brisker morals than are often taught by their modern friends. In their way they were skilful fishermen, but fished

without the gospel bait, and could catch no fry. And after they had toiled long in vain, we take up their angle rods, and dream of more success, though not possessed of half their skill.

God has shewn, how little human wit and strength can do, to compass reformation. Reason has explored the moral path, planted it with roses, and fenced it round with motives but all in vain. Nature still recoils; no motives drawn from Plato's works, nor yet from Jesus' gospel, will of themselves suffice: no cords will bind the heart to God and duty, but the cord of grace.

Man is conceived and born in sin; what can he do? Nature is sunk and fallen; and nature's creed is this, *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*, I see and I approve the better path, but take the worse. Nature may be overruled for a time by violent restraints; but nature must be changed, or nothing yet is done. The tree must first be made good, before the fruit is good. A filthy current may be stopped: but that brook is filthy still, though it cease to flow. The course of nature may be checked by some human dam; yet opposition makes the current rise, and it will either burst the dam or break out other ways. Restrained sensuality oft takes a miser's cap, or struts in paraisaic pride. Nothing but the salt of grace can heal the swampy ground of nature; as Elisha's salt, a type of grace healed the naughty waters, and the barren grounds of Jericho.

The law is not given to make a sinner righteous. Through the weakness of his flesh, it has no power to justify or sanctify him. It shews the path of duty, but neither lends a crutch to lame travellers, nor gives a heavenly title unto sinners. Paul knew the

use of the law, and declares, "It was added because of transgressions." It was added to the promise made to Abraham, which contained the covenant of grace, and was added because of transgressions, that men might know what heinous things they were.

Again, "The law entered, that the offence might abound." The offence of Adam was a sin, whose penalty was death; but no such penalty had been annexed to any sin, besides murder, from Adam unto Moses. Men know themselves to be offenders, but did not know that death was the penalty of each offence, till the law pronounced "a curse on every one, who continued not in all things." Then they saw that death was the wages of every sin. Thus when the law entered, the offence, with penalty of death, did abound; and the law entered, that such offence might abound, to certify sinners of their lost condition, and their utter need of a Saviour. Hence we read, The law worketh wrath, not our justification, but our condemnation: and by the law is the knowledge of sin. The law by its penalty discovers my condemned state: and by its spirituality, discloses my corrupted heart. Therefore Paul says, "I through the law am dead to the law;" dead to all expectation from it, either to justify my person, or to sanctify my nature. And his conclusion is this, "Wherefore the law is our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." The law sends unto Jesus, not with recommendations in our hand, but with condemnations in our bosom; and is meant to empty us of every fancied legal hope, arising from our own obedience; and force the heart to seek salvation wholly by grace through faith.

When the law has done this office, and sent a sinner wounded, poor and naked, to the good Samaritan, then it becomes a rule of life in the Mediator's hand. And Jesus having justified a sinner by his blood and righteousness, sanctifies him by his word and Spirit. The work belongs to Christ alone, as Saviour; and a believer's business is to live upon him wholly, calling on him fervently, trusting in him steadfastly, and by a life of faith, to receive from his fulness a supply for every want. No real holiness of heart, nor true morality in life, can be had, but through him, and by faith in him. He is the true vine, producing every branch with all its leaves and grapes; and is the green fir-tree, from whom our fruit is found.

For a century past, the noble building of God's grace has been shored up with legal buttresses: Moses is called in hastily to underprop his master Jesus: Galatian anvils are brought up, and gospel doctrines hammered thin, and beaten out upon them: Jesus can behold no cast of grace in his own gospel: and Paul, were he alive, would cry aloud, Who has bewitched you, O foolish Britons?

Now, Sir, I ask, what good effects have been produced by this modern gospel? A century is time sufficient, to give us full experience of it. Do we find more praying families, more crowded churches, and more empty jails? Are ropes pulled oftener in a chiming steeple, and stretched seldomer at Tyburn? Can we travel roads with more safety, and sleep with fewer bolts upon our doors? Are play-houses, and gaming houses become exceeding rare; and their owners grown very meagre, quite abashed at their occupation? Have we more stanch patriots and up-

right lawyers, more gentle masters and faithful servants, and more fair dealing practised in buying and selling?

Alas, Sir, you know, and I know the contrary. Adultery, gluttony and drunkenness, cursing and swearing, gaming and gambling, diversion and dissipation, are become so common as to make the fashion. Wickedness wears no mask, and fears no censure. Ever since the new gospel shewed its face, profaneness and infidelity have been pouring in, like a sweeping rain, and overflowing the land. God has lost his worship, Christ has lost his office, scripture has lost its credit, and morality has lost its body. It is become a pageant held up in a pulpit, but seldom noticed out of it; and as for holiness, it is the land's abhorrence. The christian title, *saint*, not applied in scripture to apostles, but to all believers, is become a name exceeding fulsome. A christian nose will wind up, like a bottle-screw, at the mention of it; and Esau cannot vomit out his spleen on Jacob more effectually, than to cry, "You saint."

Sir, these things are notorious; and a judicial consequence of departing from the scripture doctrines. God will bear no witness to any doctrines but his own. All endeavours for a reformation will be blasted, when they build on human merit, will, and power; and are not grounded wholly on the grace of Christ. A legion of discourses have been published on morality, and a little host of volumes have appeared against infidelity; yet immorality and infidelity are making rapid progress through the land. And how can this be well accounted for, if the modern gospel is the gospel of Christ Jesus?

Where the doctrines of grace are truly preached, a spirit of grace will be poured forth to make the word effectual. For thus the Lord speaketh, "As the rain cometh down from heaven, and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud; so shall my word be, it shall not return unto me void, but shall prosper." And again, "if the prophets had caused my people to hear my words, (had truly delivered my doctrine) then they should have turned the people from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." And this was spoken also of such prophets, as ran before they were sent, had no commission from the Lord, yet of these the Lord says, "If they had caused the people to hear my words, they would have turned them from their evil ways." Though they were interlopers, or even hypocrites, yet like Elijah's raven, they would have carried meat in their mouth to feed another, which they tasted not themselves. Judas though himself a devil, casteth devils out of others, when he went in Christ's name, and preached Christ's word.

Now, Sir, the case stands thus: God has promised a reformation, when his word is truly preached; but no reformation is produced by the modern preaching: things are visibly declining from bad to worse. Therefore we must conclude, either the word of a faithful God is fallen to the ground, or his word has not been preached faithfully. If God is not in blame, the preachers are and must be so.

For a long season, the good old church doctrines have been much forsaken; by some they are derided, and by many are deserted. Yet no doctrines can build the church of Christ up, but those which planted it.

We may labour much in lopping off loose branches of immorality and infidelity, yet nothing will be done effectually, till the axe is laid to the tree's root. The root is cankered, and while it remains so, the lopping off a cankered branch, will only cause more cankered shoots.

The fall of Adam, and the total ruin of man's nature by that fall, together with his whole recovery by Christ, and through faith in him, are become exploded or neglected doctrines. Yet these doctrines are the ground-work of our religion, and prove the need of regeneration as well as outward reformation; they shew the want of a new nature as well as new conduct. Scripture represents mankind, as dead in sin, and dead to God; and dead souls can have no power to help themselves. We are without strength: and therefore God has laid help on one that is mighty, able to save unto the uttermost.

Men are rightly treated in public prayer, and called by their proper name, miserable sinners: but in a sermon, they are complimented on the dignity of their earthly nature; are flattered with a princely will and power to save themselves; and ornamented with a large portion of merit. Justification by faith, the jewel of the gospel covenant, the ground work of the reformation, the glory of the church, is now derided as a poor old beggarly element, which may suit a convict, but will not serve a scribe, nor a gentleman. And the covenant of grace, though executed legally by Jesus, purchased by his life and death, wrote and sealed with his blood, is deemed of no value, till ratified by Moses. Paul declares, "No other foundation can one lay, besides that which is laid, Christ Je-

sus." But men are growing wise above what is written, and will have two foundations for their hope, their own fancied merit added to the meritorious life and death of Christ.

If an angel should visit our earth, and vend such kind of gospel, as is often hawked from the press and pulpit, though he preached morality with most seraphic fervency, and till his wings dropped off, he would never turn one soul to God, nor produce a single grain of true morality, arising from the love of God, and aiming only at his glory.

When Nicodemus waits on Jesus, he receives instruction, such as every heart should receive from his teacher. The sermon is recorded as a model, for the ministers of Christ to copy after. Nicodemus appears to be a very upright man, though somewhat timid; he was a teacher too in Israel, and of course explained the two tables, and preached what we call morality. He was also a lowly man, and therefore wanted more instruction; and he came to Jesus with a high opinion of his character, believing him to be a prophet, a teacher come from God.

Had Nicodemus lived in the present age, he would have been esteemed a topping gospel-minister, and might have made a notable arch deacon. For though a stranger to the new birth, and to faith in Christ's atonement, he was a teacher of morality, a moral man himself, and had full faith in Jesus, as a prophet. Well, he comes to Christ; and expects, no doubt, a famous lecture on morality; perhaps a handsome compliment for himself; but, lo! he hears strange news, "Except he is born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," his kingdom of grace and glory.

Moral conduct will avail him nothing, without a new birth, a new nature from above. The Jewish ruler was a stranger to this doctrine, (as some modern teachers are) and asks a mighty staring question about it; and seemed much bewildered, even after Jesus had explained the doctrine.

Yet Nicodemus, as a teacher in Israel, must have read his Bible, and of course understood the necessity of reformation, or new moral conduct. And who can be a stranger to this matter, Heathen, Jew, or Christian, whose conscience is not wholly seared? But if Jesus meant a reformation of life by regeneration, his behaviour to the ruler was disingenuous, and cannot well be justified. For on this supposition, Jesus only proposed a matter to Nicodemus, which he knew perfectly well; but proposed it craftily under a new name, or a metaphorical expression, which he knew not, and then takes occasion to upbraid the ruler with his ignorance, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" Jesus therefore must either mean something more than mere reformation of life, or his conduct towards Nicodemus will appear crafty and capti ous.

If by regeneration Jesus did not intend a moral reformation of life, but a spiritual renovation of nature, a real but secret work of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men, producing a new and spiritual service, and divine communion in that service; then his reproof of the ruler was just; because he might have learnt the doctrine of regeneration from Ezekiel, where God says, "I will take away the heart of stone, and give you a new heart and a new spirit; and I will put my Spirit within you." Herein consists God's work of regeneration; and the true reformation re-

sults from it, yet by the Lord's hand; for so it follows; "and I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them."

So when Moses gives his dying charge to Israel, he tells them, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul."

Jeremiah also preaches the same doctrine, "I will give them one heart, and one way; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

Much people, who are strangers to the work of regeneration, suppose the new birth is only christian baptism; and that every one is born again, who is baptized. Indeed the new birth may be conveyed with baptismal water; and has been conveyed to an infant. We read of John the Baptist, that he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth; yet the generalty of christians are not born of the Spirit, when baptized with water, because no proof is given of it, in their childhood, youth, or manhood. No appearance can be found of a heart devoted to God, which is the fruit of spiritual birth. The nature of a baptized child, belonging to a churchman, is still as froward and as evil, as the nature of an unbaptized child, belonging to a quaker. Which shews that after water baptism is received, a spiritual birth is wanting still, not merely to moralize the conduct, but to sanctify the heart, and devote it to God.

When Jesus had declared to Nicodemus the necessity of regeneration, he then speaks of the atonement, and of justification by faith; "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the

son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have eternal life." And so the conference ends.

The Spirit's birth brings a meetness for heaven; it teaches men to offer spiritual sacrifices, but gives no right to pardon, nor any claim to eternal life. These blessings are wholly treasured up in Christ, and are obtained only through faith in him; even as you heard just now, "Whoso believeth on him hath eternal life." Therefore Jesus conducts the ruler through regeneration to the atonement, and justification by faith, and there ends: ends with what truly finished the christian character, a whole dependence upon Jesus Christ, even after spiritual life is received, and manifested by an holy walk.

Doctor, pray save your breath a little. A small scruple has just popt into my head, and I must be satisfied. Your talk about baptizm, together with the breadth of your beaver, and the scanty number of your button holes, make me suspect you are a quaker. I do not mean to scandalize that people; they are notable men in business; very friendly to one another, and take special care of their poor. but I will not leave my own church, Doctor. Tell me then, and tell me honestly, whether you mean to revile the church baptizm, by what you said concerning it?

No Sir, not at all: I only meant to keep you from relying on baptismal water, without the Spirit's baptism. I have no doubt, that infant baptism is attended with the same blessing now, as infant-circumcision was formerly. Both the ordinances are of God's appointment, and introductory rites into his visible church on earth. The Jews were saved, as christians

are, by faith: the gospel-covenant belonged to them, as well as to ourselves; only the introducing rite was different. And if Jewish children were received into the church's fold by circumcision; why not christian children too by baptism? Nothing is said to forbid them: Jesus encouraged the bringing little children to him, and rebuked his disciples, when they sought to prevent it. And how can little children now be brought to Jesus, but by baptism.

Long before the law was given, God declares to Abraham, "that an uncircumcised child shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." These are awful words, and should be well attended to. The covenant here spoken of, is not the Sinai covenant, but the covenant of grace. Circumcision was the outward sign of this covenant to Abraham, as baptism is to us. The outward rite is different, but the covenant is the same. And therefore this awful threat against neglecting infant circumcision, may cast a further look to the sister rite of infant baptism.

I would hate no man, and I condemn no man for thinking differently in this matter; yea, I feel a tender brother's love for many, and can lay them on my heart, though they think differently: yet surely it behoves every parent to act cautiously. No harm can possibly arise from baptising an infant, but harm may arise from neglecting baptism. Such neglect may be considered as contempt; so it was considered formerly, and so it may be now.

But enough of this matter: your suspicions drew me from my proper walk; and now, Sir, I return to finish it. When the doctrines of regeneration and justification by faith become despised or deserted doc-

trines, the labors of the clergy will prove useless, their persons will grow cheap, their office seem contemptible, and they at length may be ashamed of their function and their livery.

The present age would fain be called a learned age, and the giddy people think themselves a wise people, and they are "wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." Reason flirts at revelation, merit spurns the thought of grace, tapers would outblaze the sun, and human fancies far outweigh the truths of God.—But, Sir, I must be moving.

A word or two more, Doctor, and then we take a friendly leave. Your visit to the grazier will certainly get wind. Every creature will be staring, as you walk through the parish. Your look and gait are primitive; and your beaver would almost fill a bushel. A dozen skimming dish hats, such as gentry wear, might be scooped from it. To-morrow I expect the vicar at my house, to dine upon a good fat capon, and he will surely make enquiries after you. Can you put a brief account of faith into my mouth, which may lay at my tongue's end, ready for him when he comes? He will hear what is said patiently; and if he does not approve, he will not revile. He rails at nobody; and has never had a single squabble with the parish, since he came, about tythe-eggs, pigs, or turnips.

Faith in Christ, Sir, implies not only a hearty belief of the Saviour's doctrines, but whole dependance on the Saviour's person, as our prophet, priest and king. It requires a careful use of the means of grace, but forbids all trusting in the means. I must read the word of God with care, yet not rely upon my own ability, to make me wise unto salvation, but wholly

trust in Jesus, as my prophet, to open my dark understanding, and direct me by his Spirit into all saving truth—I must watch against sin, and pray against it too; yet not rely upon my own strength to conquer it, but wholly trust in Jesus, as my king, to subdue my will, my tempers, and my affections, by his Spirit; to write his holy law upon my heart, and influence my conduct to his glory—I must be zealous of good works, as zealous to perform them, as if my pardon and a crown of glory could be purchased by them; yet wholly trust in Jesus, as my priest, to wash my guilty conscience in his purple fountain, and clothe my naked soul in his glorious righteousness, thereby receiving all my pardon and my title to eternal life.

The life of faith is thus expressed by Paul, "Run with patience the race set before you, looking unto Jesus," looking unto him with a single eye continually; and looking so by prayer and faith, as to receive supplies for every want.

Faith is the master-key to the treasury of Jesus: it opens all the doors, and brings out every store. A heart, well nurtured in this precious grace, finds the gospel rest In time of danger, sickness, or temptation, it flutters not, nor struggles hard to help itself, but stands still, and sees the salvation of God. The eye is singly fixed on Jesus, the heart is calmly waiting for him, and Jesus brings relief. Faith calls, and Jesus answers, "Here I am to save thee!"

Indeed, Doctor, I am quite charmed with this account of faith: it is just what our church homilies tell us: it secures the interest of holiness, obedience, and good works, and gives the whole glory unto God. Why, this is right; man is saved, and God glorified;

man is brought to heaven through grace, and sings eternal hallelujahs for it. I wish we heard a little more about this gospel faith, and indeed a little more about Bible sin and holiness; but these names, I think, are growing out of date.

Doctor, I have no wine to offer; but you shall take a glass of my Holland gin, before you go; it is right special. The weather is hazy, and may require it: and my heart is quite free to give it.

Sir, I thank you, but I drink no drams. They are too violent for a christian, whose understanding should be free and calm. Indeed no sort of cordial now is wanted: I am enough refreshed, if you are satisfied.

Farewell, Doctor.

Farewell, Sir; grace and peace be with you.